

Elements of Chess Strategy

Alexei Kosikov

A concise guide to
goal-oriented chess thinking



GAMBIT

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Alexei Kosikov

Translated by John Sugden

GAMBIT

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Preface

Nothing is more terrible than war. In it there are no victors – only the downtrodden, the wounded and the humiliated. Yet I dream that a time will come when battles will be fought solely on the black and white squares of the chessboard.

The book examines a question of great importance to chess-players of any level – how to study the strategy of the middlegame. It elucidates the problems of devising a plan in a game of chess. It gives practical advice and recommendations on this subject. It proposes a system of self-discipline for the competitive player, to be practised during preparation, in the course of play and after the end of a tournament game. Much other useful information is also given.

In a word – read on. You will not regret it!

The book is intended for chess-players of average and higher categories.

Symbols

x	capture
+	check
++	double check
#	checkmate
!!	brilliant move
!	good move
!?	interesting move
?!	dubious move
?	bad move
??	blunder
Ch	championship
(D)	see next diagram

Introduction

For anyone wishing to improve at chess, middlegame strategy is among the most important problems and those that demand the most work. But even in our computerized age, there is much here that remains unclear.

For the study of endgames, the methods are quite intelligible. Many books have been written on the subject, and their number continues to grow. Various computer programs also give help of considerable importance. But the main thing is that we know *what to do, in what direction to proceed* in order to achieve concrete results: Compile a stock of standard clear-cut positions. Study the technical devices and methods of combat – those which have general application as well as those characteristic of a particular endgame type (pawn endings, rook endings, minor-piece endings, etc.). In this way you will attain a certain level of mastery in the endgame. Here everything depends on your aptitude, will, persistence and time.

How to approach the opening is also clear. The time when players would work solely from encyclopaedias, opening handbooks, monographs and magazine articles is now past. These materials are valuable, but need to be supplemented with computer programs for both information and analysis. A computer will not only give you detailed information on the opening variations that you intend to play, but it will also suggest which of them appear most acceptable on a statistical basis (without, admittedly, taking into account your chess tastes, playing style, or whether a particular line has been refuted, thus rendering a statistical analysis irrelevant). Another very important point is that in preparing for a specific tournament game, a contestant with the aid of databases can obtain information on dozens or hundreds of games played by the opponent he is about to face.

Many players follow the line of least resistance in their chess development and spend large amounts of time just studying the openings. Of course, such work may bring distinct and immediate results (you study something today and surprise an opponent with it tomorrow). Yet these players fail to notice that their chess is developing one-sidedly. For there is also the middlegame! And its study is a good deal more complicated. Why?

Let me digress a little and give you a logical problem to solve. Take a box of matches and take six matches out.

Exercise: Make four equilateral triangles out of these six matches. You must abide by these conditions: the triangles must have equal sides, and every side must be the length of one match, which you are not allowed to break.

You will find the right answer if you stop looking for it on a flat surface. *You must come out into open space!* Make a pyramid, and you arrive at the solution.

So it is with the study of the middlegame – two dimensions are not enough here. You need to perfect your abilities in a large number of directions. There is the development of your combinative vision and the technique of calculating variations. There is the study of typical positions (Sicilian structures with a backward pawn, the blocked centre, the dynamic centre, opposite-wing pawnstorms, isolated queen's pawn and related structures, hedgehog structure, etc.), and the ways of handling them. There are situations involving defence, the initiative and the struggle for it, the need for restraint, and so forth. There are positions where the material balance has been disturbed. There are elements of chess strategy such as open files, weak points, the bishop-pair, etc. And much, much more. In each one of these areas there are a great many guidelines and principles that are useful to know, and it is even more important to understand how to apply them and when to ignore them completely.

However, there is at present no unified methodology for studying the middlegame – and there is unlikely to be one in the near future. And this is a good thing for chess creativity, since otherwise, after reading the appropriate book, we would all become World Champions, and chess would be reduced to a game on the lines of tic-tac-toe.

Why, then, was the present book written?

The point is that progress in any branch of knowledge is not to be halted, whether we like it or not. In chess it is hard to invent anything fundamentally new – much has already been pre-empted. But there is nothing terrible in this. The process of self-improvement is endless, and painstaking analytical work is no less complex and fascinating than discovering new concepts. Believe me!

In many years of work as a coach I have assembled a well-ordered set of conclusions. One of these is that in the body of knowledge possessed by chess-players, *there is not enough system*. Often, on receiving some piece of information, we ‘swallow’ it without digesting it or making sense of it. And then during a game, when we seek some prompting from our ‘library’ of knowledge, we use up too much time and energy finding the ‘book’ we need, or we fail to find it at all. Imagine you have acquired tens of thousands of books that have not been sorted into any kind of order. Would such a library be any use to you?

In the book before you now, abundant examples are collected, some classical, some little-known. The essential requirement was that they should be united by general themes and a system of knowledge. I have tried not to overburden the reader with too many analytical variations, but nor have I permitted any superficiality in the examination of the examples.

Chapter-by-Chapter Outline

The book comprises five independent chapters, each of which is of interest for studying a specific field of chess strategy.

The significance of being able to form a plan of action in a game of chess is something that no one needs to have explained to them. The capacity to resolve this question correctly is what constitutes supreme strategic mastery. This is the theme of the first chapter, which gives not only general recommendations but also practical advice on their implementation.

Getting ready for a tournament game, controlling the course of events in it, analysing its psychological content afterwards, drawing up practical guidelines for your subsequent duels – recommendations on these matters are furnished by the system devised by the author, to which the second chapter is devoted.

The ‘advantage of the bishop-pair’ is a familiar piece of chess jargon – but when is this term justified and when is it not? You may say that plenty of books and articles have been devoted to this question already. But if you study the third chapter you will not begrudge the time spent. For what you have before you is a *system*!

‘Warning – trap ahead!’ What chess-player is not mesmerized by the word *trap*? Who among us has not fallen victim to an opponent’s cunning? But then again, we may recall our delight on seeing the opponent caught in a snare of our own. This is a most important tactical, strategic and psychological device; but how do we learn to utilize it properly? An algorithm for the setting of traps will be discussed in the fourth chapter.

Although the theme of ‘opposite bishops in the middlegame’ is not new, I have my own views on it. You will come to know them when you read the fifth chapter.

Methodology

When assembling material for the book, apart from traditional teaching tasks (processing of information, training in the technique of calculating variations, etc.), I set myself one other goal of the

first importance but not easily attained: that of helping the reader to *learn to think logically*. I therefore took special pleasure in bringing to the reader's attention those examples which require you not only to work out concrete variations accurately but also to detect and construct a logical chain of reasoning to solve the problem.

In preparing the book I wished to present the material without recourse to either stereotypes or 'dry' formulae. I therefore took the liberty of including some witticisms and literary digressions in the text. Hopefully the well-disposed reader will understand me and the severe critic will forgive me.

Note on Exercises

In the majority of cases, the examples are accompanied by exercises, usually with a diagram in the relevant place. Note that these are not in most cases clear-cut tactical positions, where precise analysis will lead to a firm conclusion about the 'right' and 'wrong' answer. In many of them, the question is more about the assessment of the position and its strategic elements. There may well be several valid continuations, or it may be a matter of taste how to proceed. At these points you should pause to weigh up the position and how you would proceed before reading on. If your answer agrees with mine – wonderful – but if it does not, and checking with a computer suggests you have not missed anything critical, then you have perhaps found a valid alternative that also suits your playing style. I have striven to consider valid alternatives where they exist, and to point out plausible but inferior lines, but chess is a rich game and it is impossible to anticipate every idea.

You will get by far the most benefit out of these exercises if you devote a good deal of effort to them before looking at the solutions. Rather than ask that you keep pieces of card handy to cover up the solution in these cases (and hope that somehow you avoid seeing a key part of the answer when doing so), the answers to the exercises have been placed at the end of the chapter. But note that the exercises are an integral part of the chapter, and a good deal of the primary discussion occurs in their solutions. Therefore you should tackle them and read the answers before continuing on to the next example. In all cases there are page references to the material that follows, so you should never become lost!

In the exercises, you are often asked to evaluate a position. It is suggested that you answer according to a five-point scheme, namely:

- White has a won position;
- White has the better position;
- the game is equal;
- Black has the better position;
- Black has a won position.

It is clear from the above scheme that you are not being set the task of defining how much better or worse the position is. (After all, during play we don't attach a percentage score to a situation; we merely register it emotionally – do we like it to a greater or lesser degree?) But distinguishing a won position from a merely superior one is something that a high-ranking player is obliged to do.

And one final word. When working with this book, what matters is not the quantity of material devoured, but the quality of its assimilation.

1 Devising a Plan in a Game of Chess

For every good piece of advice, another ten are needed on how to carry it out.

VLADIMIR LEVI

In my practice as a coach I have often happened to hear remarks like “Today go for the attack”, “Be more careful”, “Pay attention to the tactics”, etc. And of course, “Play according to a plan”. But by no means all players, even of a high calibre, are successful in devising a plan in the course of a game of chess.

The advice you are given for the opening is to arrange your pieces in accordance with the plan you have in mind. But on the other hand, your choice of plan depends on how the pieces are arranged. What are you to do first, then? Develop your pieces or devise your plan? *In this connection I would like to remind you of the philosophical question, ‘Which came first, the chicken or the egg?’ The answer is well known: both appeared simultaneously! So it is in chess.*

Imagine you have been given the task of devising a plan following the moves 1 e4 e5. The very question, of course, is in itself devoid of sense. For a plan to be conceived, the position needs to have matured. But in that case how do you arrange your pieces; what are the right places for bringing them out?

You are recommended to do this in such a way that the development of your pieces fits in with the greatest quantity of possible plans.

So after 1 e4 e5, the move 2 ♖f3 occurs most often, although other continuations are possible too, such as 2 f4, 2 ♘c3, 2 ♗c4, etc.

With this in mind, at what point can you (or must you) begin to devise a concrete plan? This most often occurs when the development of the minor pieces is basically complete and the king has castled (or – in some openings such as the French and Sicilian Defences, etc. – when the position of the king has been determined). The major pieces are brought out only

at the second stage, since the placing of the rooks (with the queen, a ‘smart’ piece, things are simpler) should correspond to the chosen plan.

It is most important not to miss the right moment. As Lenin said, “Yesterday was too early but tomorrow will be too late. We will take the Winter Palace today, comrades!” The situation in chess is analogous. The plan cannot be born prematurely. But if you take too long to formulate it, the course of events on the board may escape your control.

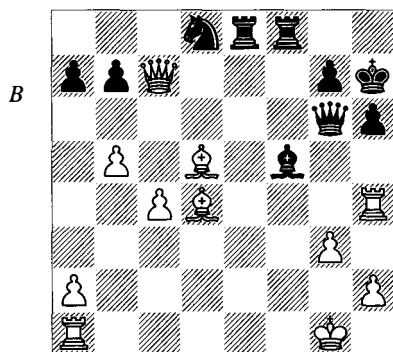
Elements of Chess Strategy

What do you think defines a chess-player’s strength? What distinguishes a grandmaster, shall we say, from a strong amateur? And what does a chess-player’s understanding consist of?

Many answers can be given to these somewhat abstract questions. In my view, the answer lies in the ability to assign the right order of priority to the elements of strategy in a particular position, and to formulate a plan of play accordingly. There are large quantities of such strategic elements in chess; for instance, a weak point, a passed pawn, piece activity, peculiarities of the pawn-structure, and so on.

Just how many elements could be named in total, I shall not venture to say. One hundred, two hundred, or more? What I do know precisely is that in every position there are certain elements of greatest importance, and that by unravelling them we enable ourselves to formulate the right plan of action.

Let us examine this with some concrete examples (remember that you should read the solution to each before moving on to the next, and that the more effort and independent thought you put in, the more benefit you will derive).

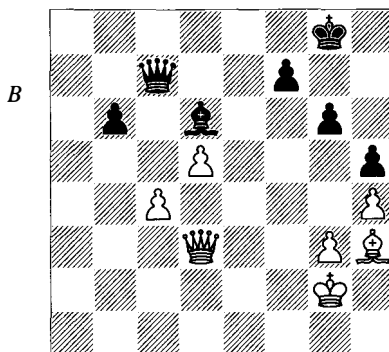


Aronson – Tal
USSR Ch, Moscow 1957

White has an extra pawn.

Exercise 1:

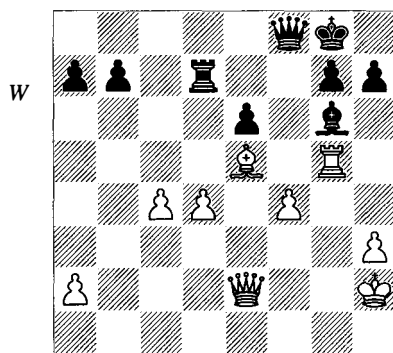
- 1) Specify the chief strategic factors on which Black should base his plan of action.
 - 2) Suggest a specific continuation for Black.
- (For the answer, see page 22.)



Khuzman – Kasparov
Simultaneous display, Tel-Aviv 1998

Exercise 3: Give your evaluation of the position.

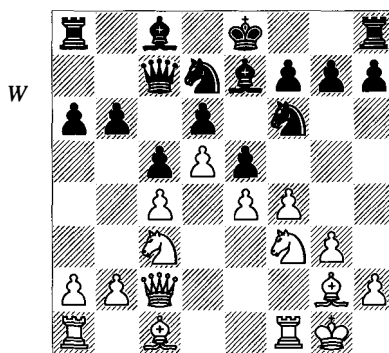
(For the answer, see page 23.)



Nimzowitsch – H. Wolf
Karlsbad 1923

Exercise 2: Indicate the chief strategic elements in this position.

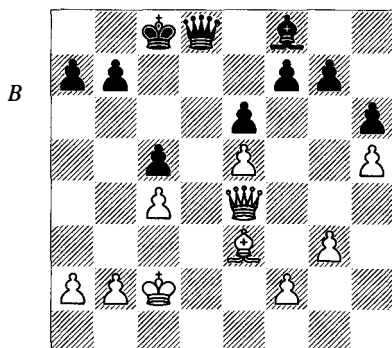
(For the answer, see page 22.)



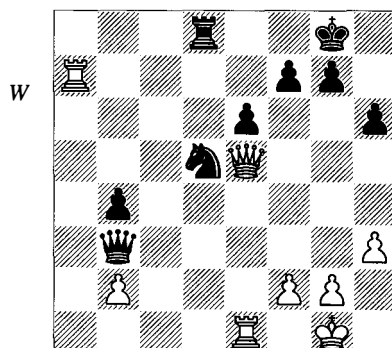
Smyslov – Matanović
Interzonal Tournament, Biel 1976

Exercise 4: Indicate the main strategic factors that constitute White's advantage.

(For the answer, see page 23.)



Geller – Hort
Skopje/Ohrid 1968



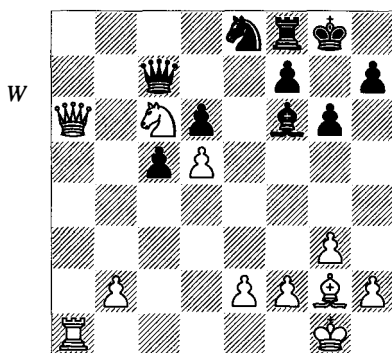
Bareev – Shirov
Linares 1994

Exercise 5:

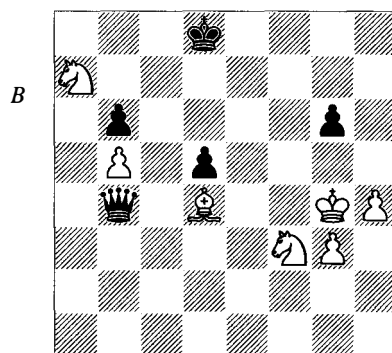
- 1) Evaluate the position.
 - 2) Indicate the strategic factors on which your evaluation is based.
- (For the answer, see page 24.)

Exercise 7:

- 1) Identify the chief strategic elements in this position.
 - 2) Suggest how to make use of them.
- (For the answer, see page 24.)



Ivanchuk – Yudasin
Candidates match (game 1), Riga 1991

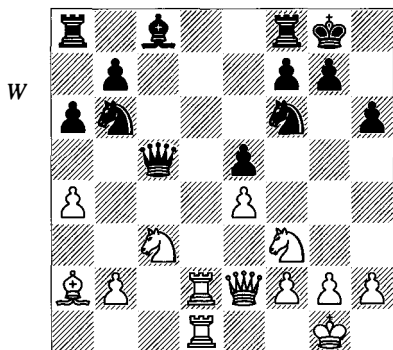


D. Gurevich – Seirawan
USA Ch, Seattle 2000

- Exercise 6:* Define the main strategic elements of the position and indicate the way to utilize them.
- (For the answer, see page 24.)

Exercise 8:

- 1) Identify the chief strategic elements.
 - 2) Give your evaluation of the position.
 - 3) In Black's place, what would you play?
- (For the answer, see page 25.)



Botvinnik – Sorokin
USSR Ch, Moscow 1931

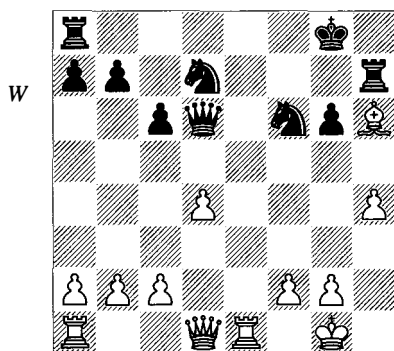
It is clear from a look at the position that the advantage lies with White.

Exercise 9: What would you play if you were in White's place?

(For the answer, see page 26.)

The problem of exchanging is a key question of chess strategy.

Botvinnik stated that "the process of a chess game (and probably of any game) consists of a generalized exchange". A correct approach to this problem sometimes enables you to avoid calculating a large number of variations. In support of this, I should like to give the following example; the comments in quotation marks are Tal's.



Tal – Botvinnik
World Ch match (game 9), Moscow 1960

"With material equality (three pawns for a piece), White has quite good endgame prospects, seeing that in endings of this type a bishop is more active. On the other hand, the

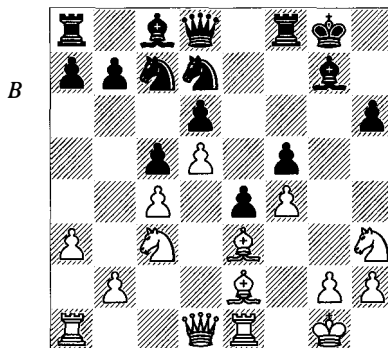
weakening of White's kingside gives Black distinct chances of an attack in the middle-game. White could now continue with 19 ♖d2, so as to occupy an important diagonal with his bishop after 20 ♙f4. In my vexation at not having obtained an attack, I decided that the position was virtually lost for White, and played the rest of the game with very little confidence."

19 ♙g5 ♜e7

"I would like to quote a conversation that took place between Mikhail Botvinnik and myself after the end of the ninth game. When I started reeling off variations at machine-gun speed to demonstrate how comfortable Black's position was, Botvinnik said: '*At first I felt this position was more pleasant for White, but then I found the right plan: I had to exchange rooks but keep the queens on.*'"

"To begin with, this judgement on the position struck me as astonishingly abstract, but when I started reviewing that same mass of variations, I could only come to the conclusion that Botvinnik was absolutely right: without queens, White's well-configured pawn-chain, supported by his active bishop, would secure him a distinct plus. With queens on the board, Black could count on a powerful attack, thanks to the weakening of the g4-square. It was experience and knowledge that achieved victory in this game on the 58th move; victory in the match was won by youth."

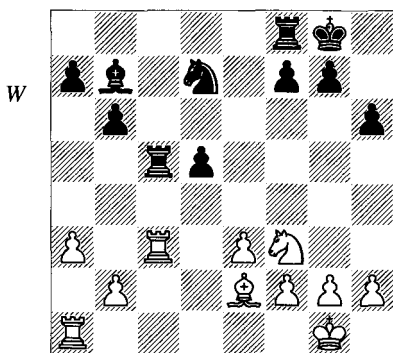
A correct solution to the problem of exchanging pieces can sometimes enable us to steer the course of a game in the direction we require.



Bronstein – Petrosian
Candidates tournament, Amsterdam 1956

Exercise 10: What would you play if you had Black here?

(For the answer, see page 28.)



Ivanchuk – Aronian
Morelia/Linares 2007

Exercise 11:

- 1) What is your evaluation of the position?
 - 2) In White's place, what would you play?
- (For the answer, see page 28.)

Having tackled these exercises, we have satisfied ourselves that identifying the chief strategic elements is an essential basis for devising a plan. But this alone is not enough. What else is required in order to master the art of planning?

Prophylactic Thinking and Anticipation of Events

Modern competitive chess differs sharply from the chess of the relatively recent past. Let us recall an era that takes us back, say, twenty-five years. The time-control was forty moves in two and a half hours for each player. After that the game would be adjourned. Days for resumption of adjourned games came after every two or three rounds. There were rest days into the bargain. Tournaments with fourteen participants would, as a rule, last three weeks. A 'plus four' result gave realistic chances of first place. And if your luck was out and you only scored 'plus two', it was still perfectly possible to reckon on a place in the prize list. It was not life but paradise!

Competitive chess today is arduous, grueling work demanding total commitment. 'Open' tournaments have become the norm. There will be a hundred or more players taking part. The playing schedule is extremely tight. The time-control is punishing. Games are played daily, or quite often at a rate of two rounds a day. But even this is not the main thing. Chess professionals derive their basic means of subsistence from prizes gained in tournaments. Yet with so many participants in a contest lasting, say, for nine rounds, there can no longer be any question of winning prizes with a 'plus four' result. You need to score seven points, sometimes even more.

Very well. In the opening rounds, as a rule, the favourites are drawn to play against less experienced opponents. In these conditions you can presume to score close to 100% (though even this happens only if everything goes your way). But afterwards you get opponents with 'teeth', conceding nothing to you either in rating points or in their strength and experience of the practical struggle. And you need to pick up another 'plus two' or 'plus three' for a prize. Where from? How? Even a drawn game, against a very strong opponent too, can prove to be a negative result.

Exceedingly intensive work is required here! The burden – physical, intellectual and emotional – increases to the maximum. It is such that you don't see the chess pieces but just circles before your eyes. And yet you have to fight! Such, alas, is a competitor's life!

Time and again I have given attention to the mode of thought that tends to be adopted by a chess amateur. "I'll try to choose the best continuation in this situation", he will say to himself, "and after that it's up to my opponent to think. When he makes his reply, that's when I carry on with my search. What's this about me having to work and think for his side too? Have I got such an outside head?"

Top-class chess-players have to behave like first-rate actors in a drama. Just as an actor must not only play the role created by the author but also get inside the personality of the character he is portraying, so a chess-player needs to experience the very thoughts, wishes and emotions of his opponent. Envisaging a possible continuation, idea or plan for his own side, he

must not stop there. He must continue his deliberations by, so to speak, turning the board through 180 degrees and seeking a response for his opponent no less energetically. But doing this is not easy, for two reasons. The first is psychological. It is very much against our wish that a refutation of our projects, or even a serious response to them, should be found.

The second reason is that this process requires an extra expenditure of energy, as we have to work not only for ourselves but also for the person opposite.

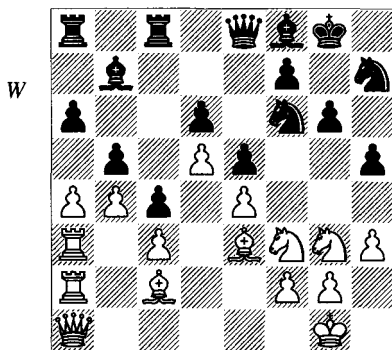
Yet prophylactic thinking is indispensable, because it is only in this way that we will be able to anticipate the course of the struggle ahead and channel it in the direction necessary and favourable to ourselves. And if, as the result of our prognosis, we come to the depressing but courageous and honest conclusion that events are going in the wrong direction for us, then it is essential to harness all our strength, knowledge, imagination and ingenuity for the sake of *radically altering the character of the struggle*.

By way of illustrating what has been said, let us take the following example.

Fischer – Spassky

Match (game 1), Sveti Stefan/Belgrade 1992

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♙e7 6 ♙e1 b5 7 ♙b3 d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3 ♘b8 10 d4 ♘bd7 11 ♘bd2 ♙b7 12 ♙c2 ♞e8 13 ♘f1 ♙f8 14 ♘g3 g6 15 ♙g5 h6 16 ♙d2 ♙g7 17 a4 c5 18 d5 c4 19 b4 ♘h7 20 ♙e3 h5 21 ♗d2 ♞f8 22 ♞a3 ♘df6 23 ♞eal ♗d7 24 ♞1a2 ♞fc8 25 ♗c1 ♙f8 26 ♗a1 ♗e8 (D)



Exercise 12:

- 1) Give your assessment of the position.

- 2) Identify the main strategic elements.

- 3) What would you play if you were in White's place?

(For the answer, see page 28.)

I am sure you found this a striking and convincing example of the power of prophylactic thinking. But let us return to the main theme of this chapter. Well, we have decided to formulate our plan in good time; the main strategic elements are correctly identified; our prophylactic thinking and anticipation of events are up to standard; vulnerable and critical points have been found in the opponent's camp.

Yet the question still remains – how are we to devise our plan, gentlemen?

The Principle of Two Weaknesses

The principle of two weaknesses is basic to forming a plan in a game of chess. The concept of a *weakness* in the broad strategic sense should be understood as a *lasting threat*. Examples are possession of an open file and the consequent threat to penetrate; a vulnerable king position; pawn weaknesses; a far-advanced passed pawn; and so on. Put more briefly, by the word *weakness* we understand something that compels the opponent to defend for quite a long time.

The implementation of a plan according to the principle of two weaknesses can be divided into five stages:

- 1) Create the first weakness.
- 2) Attack this weakness, though not in order to destroy it (that would of course be a good thing, but your forces are likely to be insufficient for it) but to compel the opponent's pieces to go over to the defence, thus depriving them of activity and mobility.
- 3) Create the second weakness.
- 4) Attack the second weakness.
- 5) Attack both weaknesses by turns; this should eventually produce a breach in the opponent's defence.

The principle of two weaknesses was conceived as long ago as the 19th century. But the precise, lucid explanation of this principle must be credited unreservedly to Aron Nimzowitsch:

“The two weaknesses are in themselves perfectly defensible, but the attacker relies primarily on the territorial advantage at his disposal, the superior state of his lines of communication. *The game is lost because at some point the defender proves unable to match his opponent in the swift regrouping of forces.*”

This last sentence of Nimzowitsch’s explains the possibility of carrying out the fifth and final stage of a plan based on the principle of two weaknesses. Let us now examine this in the context of some concrete examples.

Botvinnik – Zagoriansky

Sverdlovsk 1943

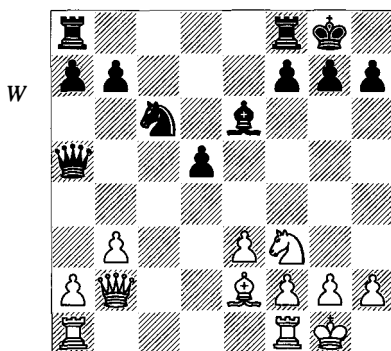
1 ♖f3 d5 2 c4 e6 3 b3 ♟f6 4 ♙b2 ♙e7 5 e3 0-0 6 ♟c3 c5 7 cxd5 ♟xd5

Small inaccuracies at the start of the game will lead to serious problems for Black later on. He already had to make a decision – whether to take on d5 with his queen (after an exchange of knights) or to go into a position with an isolated pawn. In the latter case he should avoid exchanges that are not necessary (7...exd5!).

8 ♟xd5 exd5?! 9 d4 cxd4 10 ♙xd4 ♙f6 11 ♙d2 ♟c6 12 ♙e2 ♙e6?!

In a simplified form, the verdict on positions with an isolated pawn is that the advantage lies with the side holding the initiative. Black should therefore have preferred 12...♙g4.

13 0-0 ♙xb2 14 ♙xb2 ♙a5 (D)



In terms of the principle of two weaknesses, which stage do you think the game has reached?

That’s right, the second stage. The first weakness – the pawn on d5 – has already been formed. Consequently it needs to be attacked. For this purpose let us envisage the arrangement

of White’s pieces. Rooks on the d-file (d1 and d2). Bishop on f3. Queen – this is a ‘smart’ piece that can join in the attack at any moment. But what about the knight? If it is placed on a square where it attacks the d5-pawn (i.e. c3 or f4), White loses control of the d4-square, and the freeing break with ...d4 becomes more than a realistic prospect. Let us recall Nimzowitsch, who affirmed that the isolated pawn had to be blockaded, since it strives to advance even at the cost of sacrificing itself. Does the knight belong on d4, then? But in that case the knight itself will be shielding the d5-pawn from the white rooks’ attack.

The modern attitude to the isolated pawn differs from that of Nimzowitsch; the isolated pawn must be not blockaded but destroyed! White would therefore like the knights to be exchanged off. After that, a white rook on d4 will not only blockade the black d5-pawn solidly but attack it at the same time.

In view of what has just been stated, the next phase of the game requires no commentary.

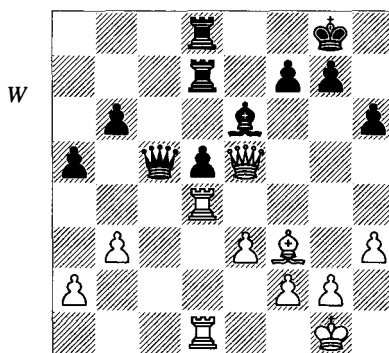
15 ♟fd1 ♟fd8 16 ♟d2 ♟d7 17 ♟ad1 ♟ad8 18 h3 h6 19 ♟e5! ♟xe5

Forced, as 19...♟d6 fails to 20 ♟c4!.

20 ♙xe5 ♙c5 21 ♙f3 b6

The threat was 22 e4.

22 ♙b2 ♙e8 23 ♙e5 ♙ed8 24 ♟d4 a5 (D)

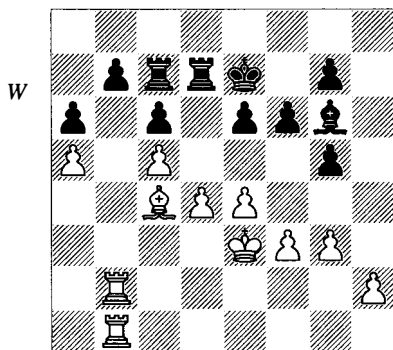


Exercise 13: Suggest White’s further plan of action.

(For the answer, see page 29.)

I would like to go more deeply into the concept of a ‘weakness’. For this, let us look at the following example (*see next diagram*).

The second stage of the ‘two weaknesses’ strategy is over: the first object of attack (the



Shirov – Kinsman
Paris 1990

b7-pawn) has been set up, and placed under pressure. What comes next seems clear – White must create a second weakness in another sector of the board.

30 h4 gxh4

30...♙f7 is no improvement in view of 31 hxg5 fxg5 32 ♙e2!, with 33 f4 to follow – or 31 ♙e2! at once.

31 gxh4 ♙f7

It looks as if the third stage (creation of the second weakness) is completed – the g7-pawn is ready to be put under pressure. But that is not entirely true. Or to be more exact, it is entirely untrue! After 32 ♖g2 ♙f8 33 ♖bg1 e5! Black manages to regroup in time, as a result of which his rooks, stationed on the second rank, will support the weaknesses on b7 and g7 without any strain. The point is that the weaknesses *are both on the same rank*.

32 e5!

Now the second weakness, on the kingside, *does* emerge. It comprises not only the g7-pawn but also the e6-pawn!

32...f5?!

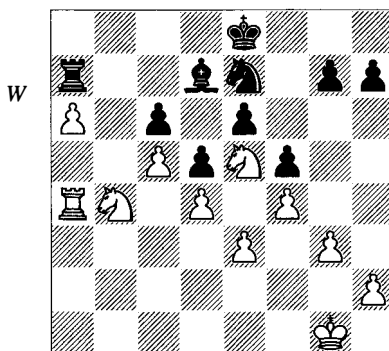
A more stubborn defence lay in 32...fxe5, though in that case too Black's position would hardly be defensible. For instance, 33 dxe5 ♙f8 34 ♖g2 (with a view to 35 ♖bg1 ♙g8 36 h5) 34...♞e7 (the weak e6-point has to be maintained) 35 ♞d1! ♞cd7 36 ♞d6 ♙g8 37 ♖gd2 ♙e8 38 f4, followed by ♙f3-g4-g5 and f5. Incidentally, I would like to point out that in this variation, White exploits the emergence of one further weakness in the black camp – the open d-file; his penetration on that file ultimately decides the issue.

33 ♖g2 g6 34 ♖bg1

The threat of an exchange sacrifice on g6 (after which the weakness on e6 will also collapse!) becomes unbearable, so Black plunges into tactical complications.

34...♞c8 35 ♖xg6 f4+ 36 ♙d3 ♞cd8 37 ♖f6 ♞xd4+ 38 ♙c3 ♞d1 39 ♖g7 ♞c1+ 40 ♙b3 ♞b1+ 41 ♙c2 1-0

After all that has been said above, it will be child's play for us to make sense of the next example.



Vukić – Davčevski
Yugoslav Ch, Bjelovar 1979

You don't have to be a super-strong chess-player to recognize that White has a won position. He is a pawn up, and the way to exploit his advantage is clear – provided of course that we have learnt to plan our play in accordance with the principle of two weaknesses. The first two stages are over. White has created a passed pawn – constituting Black's first 'weakness' – and pushed it sufficiently far. It is now time for the third stage – the formation of a second weakness on the opposite side of the board.

33 h3 ♙d8 34 g4 ♙c7 35 ♙f2 ♙e8 36 ♞a1 ♞a8 37 ♙e2 ♞c8 38 ♙d2

There is no urgency in the position; Black has no counterplay at all. Therefore, true to the principle 'do not rush', White improves the placing of his pieces to the full.

38...♞a7

Now, in the words of the fable, the tail is freed but the nose is stuck. The passed pawn on a6 is solidly blockaded (for the present!), but the defence of the kingside is weakened.

39 gxf5 exf5 40 ♖g1 g6 41 h4! ♞c8

The knight is obliged to jump back. It is beyond Black's power to defend both weaknesses at once, given the inferior mobility of his pieces.

42 h5 ♖e7 43 hxc6 ♗xc6 44 ♖h1! ♜c8 45 ♖xc6!

A typical transformation of the advantage, which involves the question of exchanging. White trades his superb knight for his opponent's atrocious bishop. But then, this misfit was the only black piece that still stood in the way of White's onslaught!

45...hxc6 46 ♖h7 ♜d7 47 a7!

Here it is – the fifth stage in implementing the principle of two weaknesses. The decisive word is spoken by the white a-pawn.

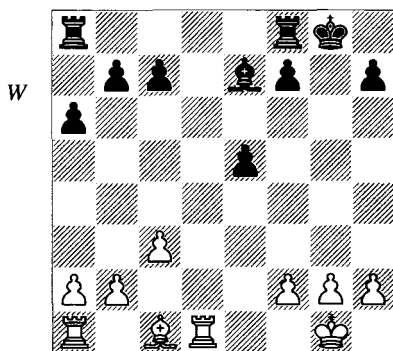
47...♜e6

The endgame after 47...♖a8 48 ♖xc6 ♜xc6 49 ♖xe7 requires no comment.

48 ♖xe7+ 1-0

After 48...♜xe7 49 ♖xc6+ ♜e6 50 ♖b8 the a-pawn queens.

As mentioned earlier, the 'patent' for the principle of two weaknesses belongs to Nimzowitsch. But this principle was, of course, also utilized by other strong players of his era.



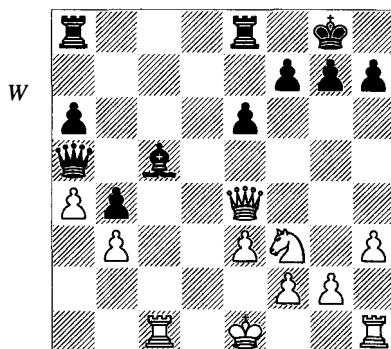
Znosko-Borovsky – Alekhine
Paris 1933

Exercise 14:

- 1) Identify the main strategic elements in this position.
 - 2) Evaluate the position.
- (For the answer, see page 30.)

Again I would like to define more precisely what we understand by the term *weakness*. We

shall be ably assisted in this by an extract from a game by the third World Champion.



Capablanca – Schroeder
New York 1916

Black's pieces (notably his queen) have been removed to the queenside, leaving the kingside undefended; consequently, despite his own uncastled king, White begins active operations against the enemy king.

19 ♖g5 h6 20 ♖h7+ ♜f8

Exercise 15: Choose between the two candidate moves 21 ♖h8+ and 21 ♖e4.

(For the answer, see page 31.)

All would now seem clear. How to formulate a plan, we know by now. But don't jump to conclusions. At the very first stage of implementing a plan based on the principle of two weaknesses, we often come up against obstacles that are hard to surmount. Suppose that your opponents these days are competent and recalcitrant; they don't want to give themselves *any* weaknesses – so there! Where, then, are the weaknesses going to come from?

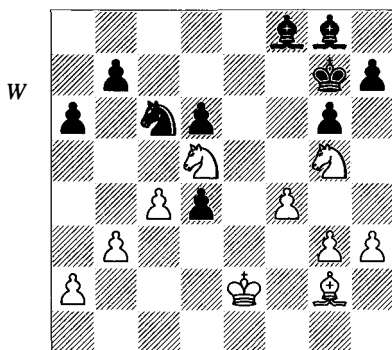
Manoeuvring

This procedure has been compared to tacking, i.e. steering a vessel with frequent changes of direction to sail into the wind.

"In level positions the play assumes a particular character. As a rule it proceeds quietly – incautious actions can quickly spoil everything. The players will usually begin some lengthy manoeuvring, in the course of which they try to avoid weakening their own position

while provoking the formation of weaknesses in the opposite camp.” (Karpov).

The manoeuvring may also have the object of regrouping the pieces.



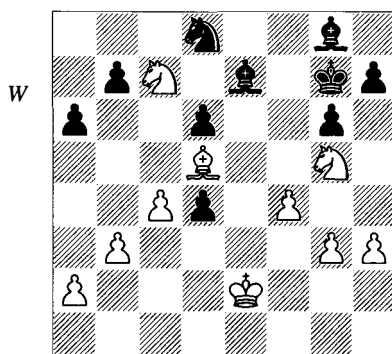
Nikolić – Sznepik
Dubai Olympiad 1986

That White has a won position is visible to the naked eye, what with the overwhelming activity of his pieces coupled with the large number of weaknesses in the black camp. Very soon, obviously, White will have little trouble surrounding and destroying the weak black pawn on d4. But then, there is no reason to hurry. To prepare, Nikolić carries out a regrouping.

40 ♖c7!

Threatening to win a pawn with either 41 ♙xc6 or 41 ♖xa6.

40...♜d8 41 ♙d5! ♙e7 (D)



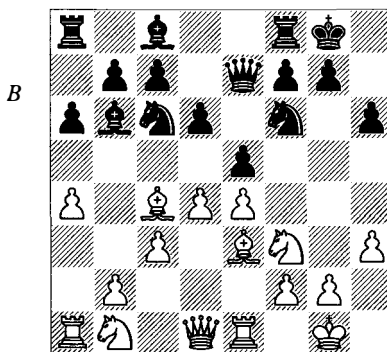
42 ♜f3!

In the space of just three moves, the activity of White's pieces has increased so much that Black is prepared to accept the material loss which he tried to avoid a moment ago.

42...♜c6 43 ♜xa6 bxa6 44 ♙xc6 ♙e6 45 g4 ♙f6

Now White can get to grips with the d4-pawn.

46 ♜d3 h5 47 ♜xd4 ♙c8 48 ♙f3 hxg4 49 hxg4 ♜f7 50 b4 ♙d8 51 a3 1-0

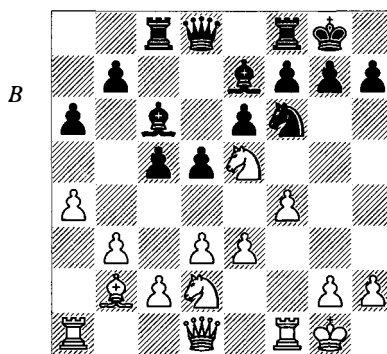


Tarrasch – Alekhine
Baden-Baden 1925

Exercise 16:

- 1) Evaluate the position.
- 2) In Black's place, how would you continue?

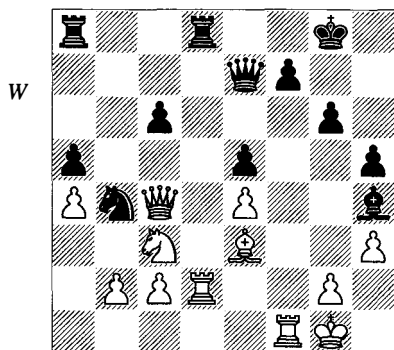
(For the answer, see page 31.)



Simagin – Taimanov
USSR Ch, Moscow 1952

Exercise 17:

- 1) Give your assessment of the position.
 - 2) Suggest a plan for Black.
- (For the answer, see page 32.)



Karpov – Spassky

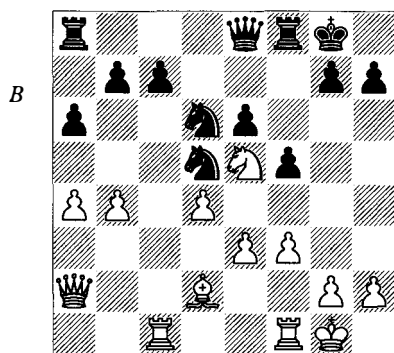
Candidates match (game 9), Moscow 1974

Exercise 18:

- 1) Evaluate the position.
 - 2) Suggest a plan of action for White.
- (For the answer, see page 32.)

‘Tacking’ to and fro is another term that was introduced into chess parlance by Nimzowitsch.

In the reference work *Chess: An Encyclopaedic Dictionary* (under Anatoly Karpov’s general editorship), the following definition is given: “Tacking is a strategic device which involves manoeuvring the pieces with the aim of creating and utilizing weaknesses in the opponent’s camp.” Yet this formulation seems to me imprecise. In this connection let us examine the following examples.



Khalifman – Balashov

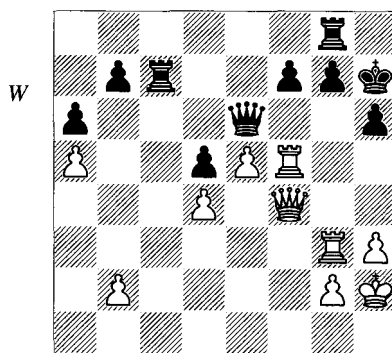
Zonal tournament play-off, Lvov 1990

“It was at this very moment, exploring the position during my opponent’s thinking time, that I hit upon the ideal arrangement for my pieces. Anticipating, I shall say that within

literally six moves(!), this arrangement actually came about” (Khalifman).

Exercise 19: Try to decide what configuration of the pieces it was that White devised. (For the answer, see page 33.)

Let’s look at two more examples that are highly instructive.

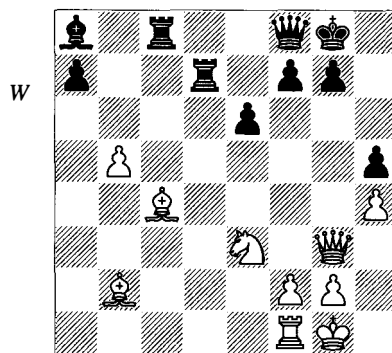


Lobron – Spraggett

Wijk aan Zee 1985

Exercise 20: What would you play if you had White here?

(For the answer, see page 33.)



Sorin – Valerga

Buenos Aires 1997

Exercise 21:

- 1) Give your assessment of the position.
 - 2) What would you play if you had White?
- (For the answer, see page 34.)

In the foregoing examples, the issue was decided by a manoeuvre that involved activating

pieces (in the last two cases it was rooks). Based on this, I would give the following definition.

Tacking, as a strategic device, means manoeuvring the pieces with the aim of activating them or utilizing weaknesses in the opponent's camp.

But there are situations where a successful manoeuvring phase is already over, weaknesses in the enemy camp have been created, a plan on the principle of two weaknesses has nearly been accomplished, yet you cannot find a continuation to finish off the struggle. In this case, what advice can be given?

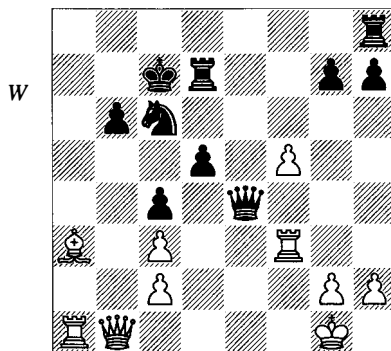
The Principle of the 'Worst' Piece

As a rule, this principle is applied when we are carrying out the final stage of a plan for exploiting two weaknesses.

The essence of the principle of the 'worst' piece is as follows. In positions that are close to being won, you often get the impression that something is missing – some trifling detail or other. Taking a look at the position from (so to speak) a detached, 'philosophical' point of view, you try to identify the least active piece – the 'worst' piece – in your own camp, and you look for a way to activate it. Improving the position of this piece may turn out to be the final drop that fills the cup of victory.

Incidentally, in our last three examples we already saw a partial implementation of the principle of the 'worst' piece. In Khalifman-Balashov it was the activation of an idle bishop that affected the outcome; in the other two cases it was the transfer of a rook to the principal battle zone.

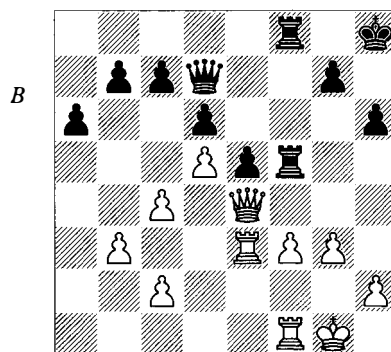
Let us examine a few more examples.



Fischer – Darga
West Germany – USA match,
West Berlin 1960

Exercise 22: In White's place, what would you play?

(For the answer, see page 34.)



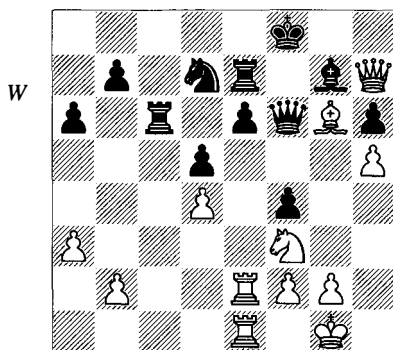
Janowski – Rubinstein
Karlsbad 1907

Exercise 23:

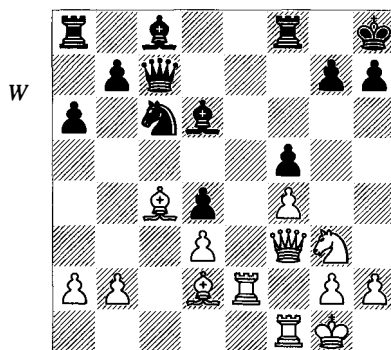
1) According to the principle of two weaknesses, which stage has the game reached?

2) In Black's place, what would you play?

(For the answer, see page 35.)



Smyslov – Simagin
Moscow 1967



Nimzowitsch – Rubinstein
Dresden 1926

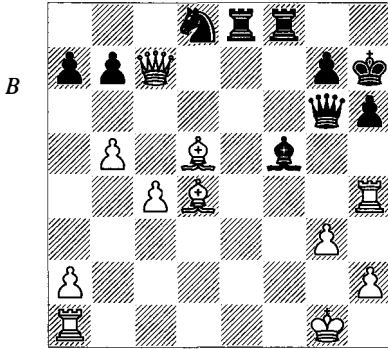
Exercise 24: What would you play if you had White here?
(For the answer, see page 35.)

Exercise 25:
1) Give your assessment of the position.
2) In White's place, what would you play?
(For the answer, see page 36.)

Well then, we have decided how to formulate a plan. Theoretically, all would seem clear. The only trouble is that in practice, I assure you, nothing will be anywhere near so simple – seeing that “for every good piece of advice, another ten are needed on how to carry it out”.

Answers to Exercises for Chapter 1

Exercise 1



White's main liabilities are his weakened king position and the poor coordination of his pieces. Tal sees a way to 'isolate' the a1-rook.

26...♖b1!!

Now that the white rook is temporarily shut out of the game, the weakness of the first and second ranks makes itself acutely felt.

27 ♖e5?!

Objectively, 27 ♖f4 is White's best attempt to survive, although 27...♖e1+ 28 ♖f2 ♖fe8 29 ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 30 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 31 ♖f3 h5 32 ♖xh5 ♖e5 is by no means pleasant for him.

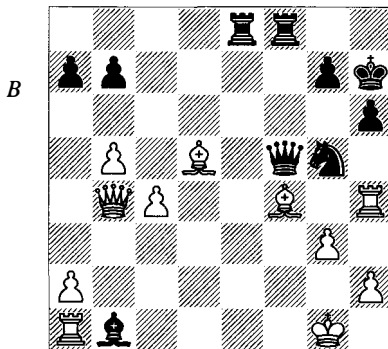
27...♗e6

27...♗f7 is also good.

28 ♖d6

28 ♖a5 may be more resilient, but 28...♗g5 29 ♖b4 (or 29 ♖e1 ♖c2 threatening ...♖f5) 29...♖e4 favours Black.

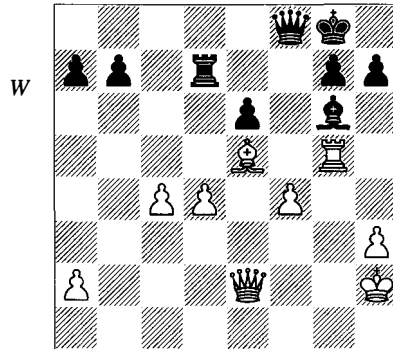
28...♖f5 29 ♖f4 ♗g5 30 ♖b4 (D)



At last the rook is freed from its prison. But in the meantime the black knight has managed to gallop right into the thick of the action.

30...♖e4 31 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 32 ♖f1 ♖e2 33 ♖d6 ♖xa2 34 ♖d5 ♖c2 35 c5 ♖d8 36 ♖d6 ♖e8 0-1
(Now return to page 10.)

Exercise 2

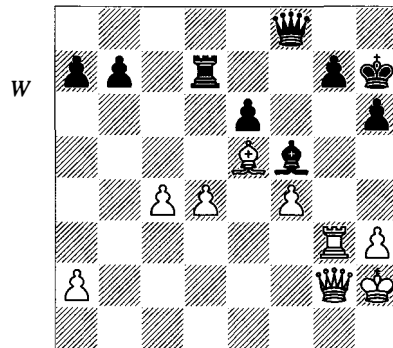


You are right if you pointed out that the main characteristic is the presence of opposite bishops in a middlegame situation. If you add to this the greater activity of White's pieces and his extra control of space, then his advantage becomes obvious. But is it enough to win? Let us follow how the game went.

33 ♖g4 ♖f5 34 ♖g2 h6?!

An inaccuracy. Better is 34...♖d3, forcing 35 c5.

35 ♖g3 ♖h7 (D)



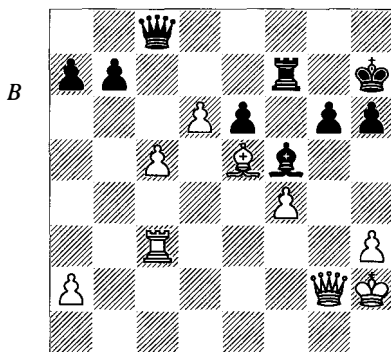
36 d5!

This is the whole point! Now the creation of a passed pawn will be one more thing (in addition to the defence of his king) to require Black's attention.

36...♖f7?

A preferable line is 36...exd5 37 cxd5 g6 38 ♖c3 ♜d8 39 d6 b5 because after 40 ♖c7?! ♜xc7 41 dxc7 ♜d3, Black is not in danger of losing.

37 d6 g6 38 c5 ♜c8 39 ♖c3 (D)

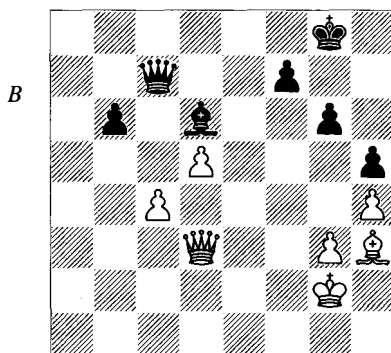


White's intention is obvious – to play 40 c6.

Additional Exercise 2A: Assess Black's survival chances after 39...♜c6 and 39...♜d7.

(For the answer, see page 37.)

Exercise 3



In this opposite-bishop position Black clearly has the advantage, but I don't think everyone would make so bold as to give a verdict of 'Black wins'. And yet it really is so. Despite the small number of actors on the board, the presence of queens gives the position the character of a sharp middlegame. Black's task is simple – to bring up his queen and have a 'heart-to-heart talk' with the white king.

See how elegantly Kasparov coped with this task.

39...♜e7! 40 ♖h1 ♜e5 41 ♖h2 ♜f6!

Threatening 42...♜xh4.

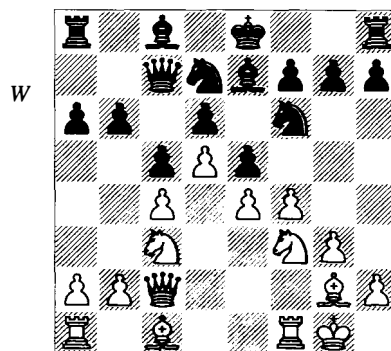
42 ♖g2 ♜b2+! 0-1

On 43 ♖f1 Black plays 43...♜h2, while 43 ♖g1 is met by 43...♜c5+ and 44...♜f2. If 43 ♖h1, then 43...♜f2 is decisive.

Black only made four moves (and all with his queen!), but this proved sufficient for victory. A stage with a solo performer!

(Now return to page 10.)

Exercise 4



Control of greater space is an extremely important element of chess strategy. It enables you to transfer your forces quickly to any sector of the battlefield.

This holds true in the position before us – White's spatial advantage means his pieces are freer, more mobile and more active. The game continued:

12 a4 ♜f8?!

Conducting the defence (and that is precisely what Black had to attend to here) means doing what you can *while* you can, rather than what you would like to do. It was essential for Black to shore up his queenside defences with 12...a5, even though this would leave him without any possibility of counterplay.

13 a5! bxa5 14 ♜a4+ ♜8d7 15 fxe5 dxe5 16 ♜xa5

As a result, a new salient factor of the strategy has emerged: the weak pawns on a6, c5 and e5.

16...♜xa5 17 ♜xa5 ♜b8 18 ♜a3

Aiming to meet 18...♜b4 with 19 b3, followed by bringing the knight from f3 via e1 to d3.

18...♜d6 19 ♜e1 h5 20 h3 0-0 21 ♜d3 ♜b6 22 b3 ♜b7 23 ♜e3 ♜fc8 24 ♜a5

By attacking the pawn weaknesses, White compels his opponent to go over to lifeless

defence without even the dream of creating any counterplay in the near future.

24...♖bd7 25 ♜fa1 ♙c7 26 ♜5a2 ♙d6 27 ♙f3 ♙c7 28 ♜a5 ♙c8 29 ♙d1 g6 30 ♙g2 ♙g7 31 ♜1a3 ♙b7 32 g4!

“Having tied down the black pieces, White goes into action on the kingside. This is a typical example of play on both wings” (Smyslov).

32...hxc4 33 hxc4 ♖h7 34 ♖a4 ♜bc8 35 ♜a2

Intending, if the case arises, to carry out b4 after a preliminary ♜b2.

35...♙e7 36 ♜b2 ♖hf6 37 ♙f3 ♖h7 38 ♙f1! f5?!

With less control of space and less active pieces, you should of course avoid sharp tactical clashes.

39 gxf5 gxf5 40 ♜g2+!

You see! The spatial plus permits White to switch his rook quickly to a different sector of the board, while Black cannot do the same.

40...♙f6 41 ♙h5 fxe4

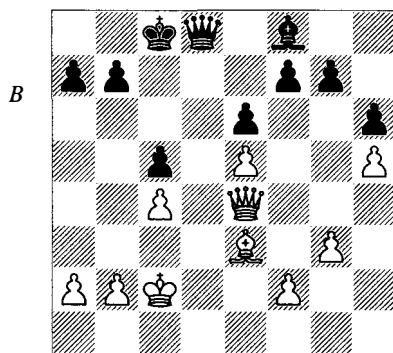
It was no good playing 41...f4 either, in view of 42 ♙f2 ♖g5 43 ♙h4 ♜g8 44 ♙g4 followed by 45 ♙xd7.

42 ♖f2 ♙f8 43 ♖xe4+ 1-0

The game was adjourned here, and Black resigned without resuming. He can't play 43...♙f5 due to 44 ♙g6#, but if 43...♙e7 then 44 d6+ wins.

(Now return to page 11.)

Exercise 5



“The ending is very difficult, perhaps strategically lost for Black. White has a spatial plus, better-placed pieces, a superior pawn-structure and the possibility of a pawn offensive on the kingside. The position of the pawn on h5 plays

an important role here.” (Mikhail Shereshevsky).

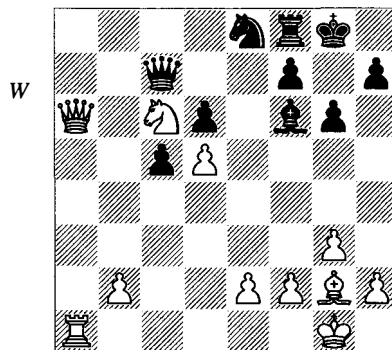
The game continued:

24...♙a5 25 a3 ♙a4+ 26 ♙c1

Additional Exercise 5A: Choose between the candidate moves 26...♙c7 and 26...♙e7.

(For the answer, see page 37.)

Exercise 6



White has an extra pawn, but that is the least of Black's troubles. His pieces have lost their coordination and, crucially, the black queen's mobility is severely limited. Once you realize this, it isn't hard to find the solution you are looking for:

27 ♙h3!!

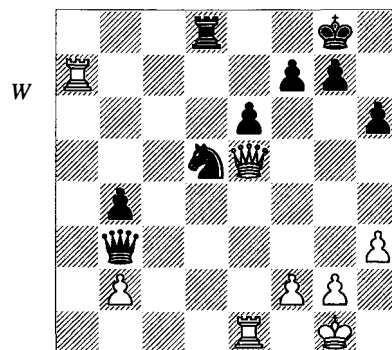
Depriving the queen of its last available square.

27...♙g7 28 ♙b5 1-0

There is no defence against 29 ♜a7.

(Now return to page 11.)

Exercise 7



White is the exchange for a pawn up. Black's situation of course is bleak. However, the strong

position of his knight would seem to leave him with some hope of salvation. From White's viewpoint, the exchange of a pair of rooks seems indicated, but after 31 ♖e1 ♜c2 32 ♖a8 ♜xa8 33 ♖xa8+ ♘h7 there is still everything to play for. More direct play with 31 ♖e4 is less convincing: 31...♜c2! 32 ♖xf7 (32 ♘h2 ♜xf2; 32 ♖g4 g6 33 h4?? ♜d1+) 32...♜c1+ 33 ♖e1 ♜xe1+ will not be a trivial ending for White to win. An attempt to knock away the knight's support by f4-f5 gives Black extra counter-chances thanks to the weakening of White's own king position. Yet our previous example ought to give a clue to finding the right path.

In this case too we may single out the limited mobility of Black's seemingly active queen. This circumstance is excellently exploited by Evgeny Bareev.

31 ♜d4!!

The white queen takes up a superb position in the centre of the board! *Centralization is one of the foundations of chess strategy.*

White now threatens 32 ♜xe6!.

31...♜e8 32 ♜e2!!

Unexpectedly, the queen on b3 is 'under arrest'. As a result, Black's pieces are totally paralysed. The rook is tied to the defence of the e6-pawn, while if the knight moves, the b4-pawn is lost (32...♘f6 33 ♜e3 ♜c2 34 ♜xb4 ♘d5 35 ♜b5). On the other hand, if Black confines himself to a waiting policy (...♘f8-g8), then after a preliminary ♘h2 White throws his f-pawn forward with decisive effect (f4-f5). Black therefore hastens to create counterplay.

32...♜c8 33 ♜xe6 ♘c3!? 34 ♜ae7!

Technically the most precise solution, though White also has a won position after 34 ♜xf7 ♘e2+ 35 ♜xe2 ♜c1+ 36 ♘h2 ♜xf7 37 ♜xb4. For example, 37...♜c7+ 38 g3 (38 f4? ♜c4 39 ♜b3 ♜xf4+ 40 g3 ♜f7) 38...♜c6 39 ♖e1. However, any complications in a won position are wholly unwelcome to the stronger side, especially in conditions of limited time and energy when the probability of mistakes in calculation increases.

A chess-player's technical mastery consists not in achieving his aim as quickly as possible but in denying his opponent any extra chances.

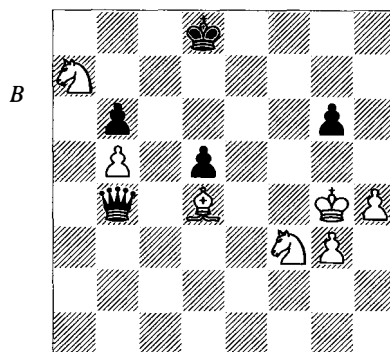
34...♜xb2 35 ♜e8+ ♜xe8 36 ♜xe8+ ♘h7 37 ♜d3+ g6 38 ♜c4! ♜b1+

Or 38...♜a2 39 ♜xb4.

39 ♘h2 ♜f5 40 ♜d4 1-0

(Now return to page 11.)

Exercise 8



The position features an unconventional balance of forces: a queen against three minor pieces. Practice has shown that in such cases, the advantage most often belongs to the pieces, which prevail not by their strength but by their number. Only this presupposes that the pieces are coordinating their actions, which can definitely not be said of the position before us. In addition, the white king feels extremely insecure (should the black queen, for instance, land on f5). You might think it would only take White one or two moves to consolidate. But how can he find that time? Admittedly 48...♜b1 (or 48...♜f8) is met by 49 ♘xb6+ ♘e8 50 ♘d4, with ♘ac6 and ♘d8-g5-f4 to follow. Also in the event of 48...♜a4 49 ♘c6+ ♘e8 50 ♘ce5, White has (at the very least) put the worst behind him, even if he loses the pawn on b5.

The game, however, continued wholly unexpectedly with:

48...♘e8!!

Piece coordination is also one of the most important elements of strategy.

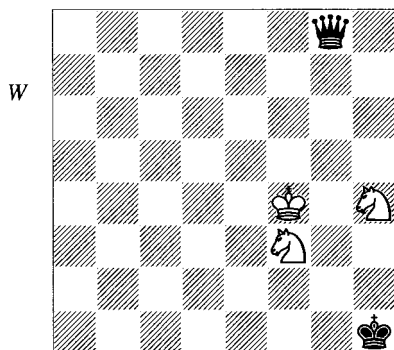
After this move it turns out that White's pieces are unable to defend each other, and one of them is lost.

49 ♘c6 ♜f8! 50 ♘f6

White has to choose the least of the evils. He decides to give up his bishop in the interest of holding the position by constructing a fortress.

50...♜xf6 51 ♘cd4

In situations of this type, the decisive factor is the degree of freedom of the stronger side's king.



theoretical position

Of course, it is well known that the ending of ♖ vs ♜ is in general drawn, if the king and knights are adequately coordinated and flexible. In the above position, the knights are rigidly placed, but as long as the black king remains firmly behind bars, White holds the draw with no particular trouble by manoeuvring his king round the knight on f3 (the key factor here is that Black cannot put his opponent in zugzwang). But if Black could drive the white king to a8 and place his queen on c7, the hobbled knights would succumb to zugzwang.

In the game we are looking at, the presence of pawns on the board gives the stronger side the additional possibility of sacrificing the queen for both knights if appropriate, so as to reach a won king and pawn ending. The one important thing is not to fall for a knight fork. The plan is simple: Black will gradually bring his own king up to his opponent's, with the aim of disturbing the coordination of the white pieces and, eventually, winning material.

Bearing in mind what I have said so far, the conclusion of the game follows almost without commentary.

51...♖h8 52 ♜f4 ♜e7 53 g4 ♖f6+ 54 ♜e3 ♜d6 55 ♜c6 ♜c5 56 ♜cd4 ♜b4 57 g5 ♖e7+ 58 ♜f4 ♖e4+ 59 ♜g3 ♜a4 60 ♜f2 ♖g4 61 ♜e3 ♜b4 62 ♜f2 ♖e4 63 ♜e2 ♖e8 64 ♜ed4 ♜c4

By threatening to advance his king further, Black compels White to resort to a pawn sacrifice.

65 h5

The remaining moves were:

65...gxf5 66 g6 ♜c5 67 g7 ♖g8?

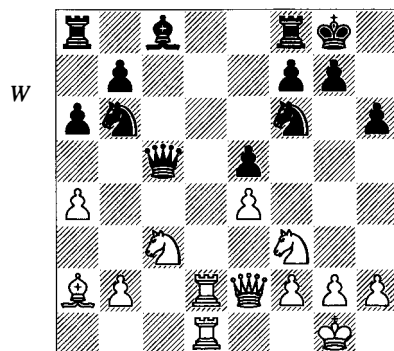
67...♖f7 is more accurate.

68 ♜f5 ♖h7 69 ♜e3 ♜xb5 70 ♜3d4+ ♜a4 71 ♜f3?

71 ♜c6 is a better try.

71...b5 72 ♜f4 b4 73 ♜c6 b3 0-1
(Now return to page 12.)

Exercise 9



It is easy to perceive that the main strategic feature of the position is Black's backwardness in development. This is primarily bound up with the problem of his bishop on c8. Hence a move that suggests itself is 20 h3!?, leaving White with an appreciable plus; for example, 20...♜d7 21 ♜d6! ♜xa4 22 ♜xa4 ♜xa4 23 ♜xf6! gxf6 24 ♜h4, with a crushing attack. Evidently Black's best continuation would be the modest 20...♜e8 (intending ...♜e6), but here again after 21 ♜d6 White's position is superior.

However, Botvinnik had his own way of viewing the strategic features of a position. In what follows, the annotations in quotation marks are taken from his book *Analytical and Critical Works*.

20 ♖e3!!

"This move, not at all an obvious one, is the strongest. After the queen exchange, which cannot be avoided (20...♖c7 21 ♜xe5), the defects of Black's position will become more substantial. It will be even harder than before to oppose anything against White's pressure in the d-file; the e5-pawn will become weak and the point f7 will also need protection. In the seven years I had been playing chess, this was probably the subtlest positional move I had made."

20...♖xe3 21 fxe3 ♜g4 22 a5 ♜c8

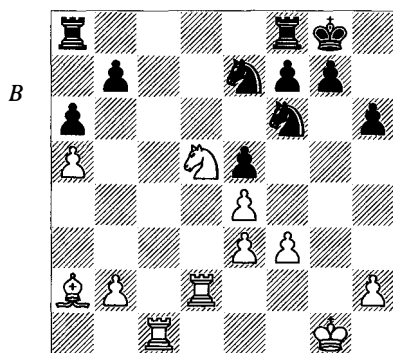
"The knight heads for c6, where it will be protected and active. Transferring it to c5 would be worse; for example, 22...♜bd7 23 h3 ♜xf3

24 gxf3 ♖c5 (24...♙fd8? 25 ♖d5!) 25 b4 ♖e6 26 ♖xe6 fxe6 27 ♖a4! followed by 28 ♖c5 with complete domination."

23 ♖c1 ♖xf3

"How else is the pawn on e5 to be saved? If 23...♙e8, then 24 h3 ♖e6 (or 24...♖h5 25 ♖h4! threatening 26 g4) 25 ♖xe6 ♙xe6 26 ♙d8+."

24 gxf3 ♖e7 25 ♖d5 (D)



"By inducing the exchange of one of Black's two knights, White ensures that entry squares on the seventh rank are freed from enemy control. On 25...♖fxd5, White would not play 26 exd5 ♖f5 27 e4 on account of 27...♖d6, when the knight blockades the pawn. Instead he would continue 26 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 27 ♙xd5, after which material gains are guaranteed."

However, I venture to disagree with this note. For a start I will take issue with the last variation, which breaks off after 27 ♙xd5. In the event of 27...♙ac8! I succeeded in detecting neither guaranteed material gains nor even the slightest tangible plus for White in either of the following variations: 28 ♙dc5 ♙xc5 29 ♙xc5 f6 30 ♙c7 ♙f7 or 28 ♙xc8 ♙xc8 29 ♙xe5 ♙c1+ 30 ♖f2 ♙c2+ 31 ♖g3 ♙xb2.

Nonetheless, Botvinnik's evaluation of the exchange on d5 is correct! It is just that after 25...♖fxd5 26 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 White must take with the pawn: 27 exd5!. Here again it is true that if Black makes the strongest reply, 27...♙ac8 28 ♙dc2 ♙xc2 29 ♙xc2 ♙d8 30 e4 ♙d7, there are no immediate material gains in sight. Yet clearly after 31 ♙c8+ ♖h7 32 ♖f2 Black will have to defend a very difficult rook ending.

Another dubious assumption is that 26 exd5 (in answer to 25...♖fxd5) is unpromising. The point is that after 26...♖f5? (26...♙ac8 is necessary, as in the line above) White must not allow

his d-pawn to be blockaded (27 e4 ♖d6) but must throw it forward, opening his bishop's diagonal at the same time. It would be extremely dangerous for Black to take the pawn on e3; for instance, 27 d6! ♙fd8 28 d7! (28 ♙c7? ♖xd6) 28...♖xe3?! 29 ♙c7 (or the immediate 29 ♖b1!) 29...♙ab8 30 ♖b1! f5 31 ♖f2 f4 32 ♖e4. After 27 d6 ♙fd8 28 d7 the least of the evils for Black is evidently 28...♖f8. But even then, after 29 ♙c7 ♙ab8 30 ♖b1! ♖e7 31 ♖e4, his position is scarcely defensible.

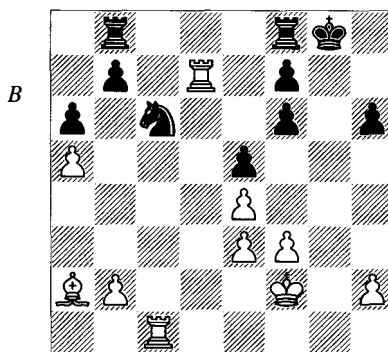
So we see that Botvinnik was right in his assessment of the position but wrong about the variations he gave.

But we shall now return to the game.

25...♖c6 26 ♖xf6+ gxf6 27 ♙d7

At last! If now 27...♖xa5 then 28 ♙cc7, followed by the decisive 29 ♖xf7+. But the move Black plays doesn't stop White from penetrating to f7 either.

27...♙ab8 28 ♖f2! (D)



Trouble unexpectedly creeps up on Black from a new direction. The threat is 29 ♙gl+ and 30 ♖xf7.

28...♖xa5 29 ♙cc7 ♙bc8 30 ♙xf7

Or 30 ♖xf7+ ♖h8 31 ♖d5, which leads to the same thing.

30...♙xc7 31 ♙xc7+ ♖h8 32 ♖d5! b5

Otherwise material losses are unavoidable: 32...♙b8 33 ♙f7, or 32...♖c6 33 ♙xb7. But now a possibility arises for 'stalemating' the knight.

33 b3 ♙d8 34 ♖g3

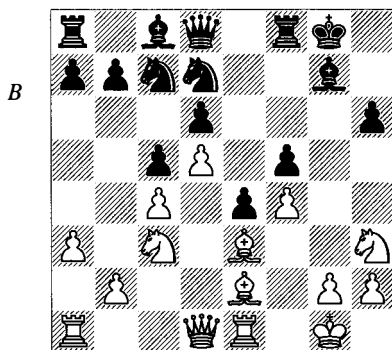
After 34 ♙f7 ♙d6 Black could not play ...f5 to relieve his position, but on the other hand his knight could emerge to freedom. White prefers not to allow this.

34...f5 35 ♖h4 fxe4 36 fxe4 ♙d6 37 ♖h5

Botvinnik now carried out the manoeuvre f7-g6 and hxh6 ; he went on to win on the 55th move. Analysing how this game went, I should like to emphasize that the foundation for White's victory was laid by the unconventional exchanging move 20 We3!! .

(Now return to page 12.)

Exercise 10



To the surprise of many spectators who were watching this duel, 'Iron Tigran' continued with:
17... exc3!

Not only is Black presenting his opponent with the advantage of the bishop-pair, but in so doing, he is parting with none other than that dark-squared bishop which true King's-Indianites treat with special affection and care. What were Petrosian's guiding considerations when he resolved on this far from obvious exchange?

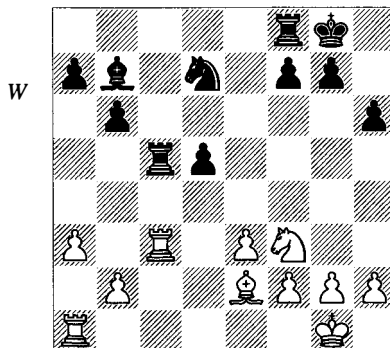
White's main strategic threat in positions of this type is to prepare and carry out a break with g4. He would be furthering this end by first transferring his knights to f2 and e3, and his dark-squared bishop to the a1-h8 diagonal. After $17...\text{exc3!}$, all this becomes impossible. In addition, the resulting pawn-structure significantly reduces the activity of White's bishops. The further course of the game confirmed the correctness of Petrosian's decision:

18 bxc3 f6 19 a4 h8 20 f2 g8 21 h1 e8 22 g1 g6 23 d2 d7 24 g3 ae8 25 a5 e7 26 ab1 c8 27 g2 eg7 28 bg1 ce8 29 h3 h5 $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$

In the position that has now arisen, the initiative of course belongs to Black, but evidently considering the situation in the tournament, he agreed a draw.

(Now return to page 13.)

Exercise 11



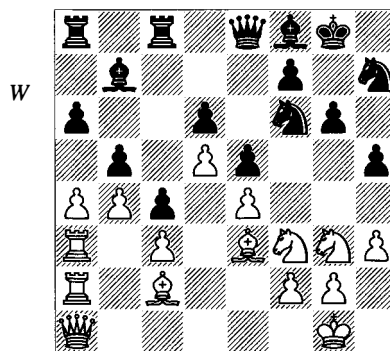
Please don't be surprised at my own laconic answers to these questions. First – White of course is better, but that is all. Secondly – in the game, Ivanchuk played:

17 cc1

Additional Exercise 11A: How would you continue, this time for the black side?

(For the answer, see page 38.)

Exercise 12



White's advantage is obvious for two main reasons:

- potential control of the a-file;
- White's spatial plus (the pawn on d5 has more of a cramping effect than the one on c4).

True, an attempt to break through directly on the a-file achieves nothing (27 axb5 axb5 28 a7 xa7 29 xa7 a8 30 a5 xa7 31 xa7 a8), but the threat to do so is constantly in the air and an irritation to Black.

Evidently guided by the principle of redeploying his 'worst piece' (I shall discuss this principle in a later section of this chapter), Fischer played:

27 ♖f1!?

(Admittedly White's bishop on c2 is not doing much either, but its moment has yet to come.)

Black responded with a neutral continuation:

27...♗e7 28 ♖d2 ♔g7 29 ♖b1!!

I should think it was only after this unexpected move that Spassky realized, to his horror, the error of his lethargic strategy. White threatens the lethal 30 axb5 axb5 31 ♖a7 ♖xa7 32 ♖xa7 ♖a8 33 ♖xa8 ♗xa8 34 ♗xa8 ♗xa8 35 ♖a3, winning.

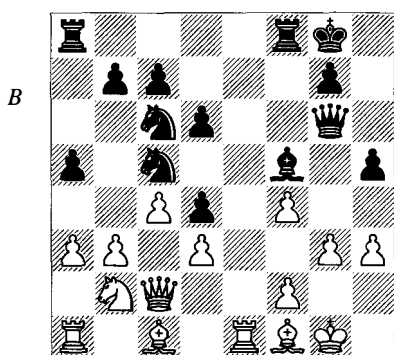
In an attempt to confuse his opponent, Spassky resolved on a desperate and unsuccessful piece sacrifice:

29...♖xe4!? 30 ♗xe4 f5 31 ♗c2 ♗xd5

I give the concluding part of the game without commentary:

32 axb5 axb5 33 ♖a7 ♗f6 34 ♖bd2 ♖xa7 35 ♖xa7 ♖a8 36 g4 hxg4 37 hxg4 ♖xa7 38 ♗xa7 f4 39 ♗xf4 exf4 40 ♖h4 ♗f7 41 ♗d4+ ♗e6 42 ♖f5 ♗f8 43 ♗xf4 ♖d7 44 ♖d4 ♗e1+ 45 ♗g2 ♗d5+ 46 ♗e4 ♗xe4+ 47 ♖xe4 ♗e7 48 ♖xb5 ♖f8 49 ♖bxd6 ♖e6 50 ♗e5 1-0

In this game Fischer admirably sensed the most vulnerable point in Black's position (the pawn on b5) and exploited it brilliantly. *The ability to spot the opponent's weakest link is a sign of the highest strategic mastery.* And in this matter Fischer never ceased to astonish.



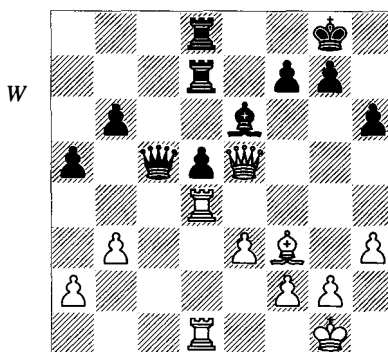
Saidy – Fischer

USA Team Ch, New York 1969

Additional Exercise 12A:

- 1) Evaluate the position.
- 2) In Black's place, what would you play? (For the answer, see page 39.)

Exercise 13



It isn't hard to see that the second stage of the 'two weakness' strategy is completed. White has attacked the pawn on d5 with as many pieces as possible but has not been able to destroy it. On the other hand, his opponent's pieces have been reduced to passivity, deprived of mobility and counterplay. To improve his position, White must proceed to the third stage – creation of a second weakness. But first he must decide where. There is no possibility on the queenside or in the centre. Consequently:

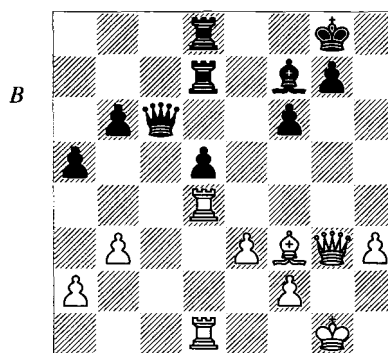
25 g4!

The second weakness is the black king! The weakening of White's own king position is immaterial – the black pieces are not trained on it, and their reach is limited.

25...♗c6 26 g5 hxg5 27 ♗xg5 f6

Taking measures against ♖h4 and ♗h5.

28 ♗g6 ♗f7 29 ♗g3 (D)



29...f5?

In the sector where his opponent is attacking, the defender is not advised to move his pawns without extreme necessity. Black's position now becomes strategically untenable.

30 ♖g5 ♜e6 31 ♔h1 ♜e5 32 ♖g1 ♜f8 33 ♜h6

Threatening both 34 ♜h4 and 34 ♜xb6.

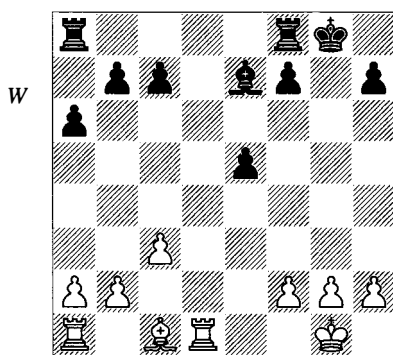
33...♜b8

33...♜d6 34 ♜xg7+, and 33...g6 34 h4 followed by h5 are also hopeless for Black. 33...♜c8 is the most resilient defence.

34 ♜h4 ♜f8 35 ♜h8+ ♜g8 36 ♜f4 ♜bb7 37 ♜g5 ♜f7 38 ♜h5 ♜a1+ 39 ♜g2 g6 40 ♜xg6 ♜h7 41 ♜d6+ ♜be7 42 ♜d8+ 1-0

(Now return to page 15.)

Exercise 14



It may look as if White's control of the open d-file and Black's extra pawn-island make the white position preferable.

However, perhaps you have under-rated the role of the e5-pawn. It gives Black a spatial advantage, enabling his king to occupy a more centralized position. This is highly significant in the endgame.

Which factors are more important, then? And what is the verdict on the position as a whole? Rather than hurry with the answer, let us follow how the game went.

16 ♜h6 ♜fd8 17 ♜f1?

White starts to play planlessly. Lulled by the harmlessness of the situation, Znosko-Borovsky clearly loses his sense of danger. After 17 f4! Black could hardly count on an advantage. For this reason the diagram position should be rated as equal.

17...f5 18 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8

The exchange of a pair of rooks is favourable to Black, as it lets his king feel very comfortable in the centre.

19 g3

Defending against a possible ...f4.

But let us come back to the principle of two weaknesses. Which stage of the plan is currently being pursued? That's right, the first stage! The first weakness, forcing White onto the defensive in order to guard it, has yet to be created. But now the g3-pawn becomes the 'hook' on which Black can later fasten in order to gain control of the open h-file (after ...h5-h4 and ...hxg3).

19...♜f7 20 ♜e3 h5 21 ♜e2 ♜e6 22 ♜d1 ♜g8!

The question of exchanging arises again. The disappearance of the first pair of rooks made the position of Black's centralized king completely secure. Retention of the second pair will later enable Alekhine to break through successfully into his opponent's camp.

23 f3 h4 24 ♜f2 hxg3 25 hxg3 ♜h8!

Now the first weakness has appeared! The threat to invade with the black rook on the h-file diverts White's attention.

26 ♜g1 ♜d6 27 ♜f1 ♜g8 28 ♜f2

The time has now come to think about creating a second weakness (stage 3 of the plan).

28...b5!

Intending a subsequent pawn offensive on the queenside with ...a5, ...b4, etc.

29 b3?!

Extreme care must be exercised when making pawn moves on the wing where your opponent is stronger, as you may be giving him further objects to fasten onto.

29...a5 30 ♜g2 a4 31 ♜d2

When defending, you must aim to remove any points of conflict. However, 31 b4 would merely defer the tactical confrontation, which would be renewed after the black rook's arrival at c4 (via the route g8-a8-a6-c6).

31...axb3 32 axb3

The second weakness has appeared: the open a-file on the queenside. According to the principle of two weaknesses, the fourth stage of Black's plan is being completed and the fifth is beginning.

32...♜a8 33 c4 ♜a3! 34 c5 ♜e7 35 ♜b2 b4 36 g4

White's attempt to create counterplay clearly comes too late.

36...f4 37 ♜f1 ♜a1+ 38 ♜e2 ♜c1 39 ♜a2 ♜c3 40 ♜a7 ♜d7 41 ♜b7 ♜xb3 42 ♜b8 ♜b2+ 43 ♜f1 b3 44 ♜g1 ♜c6 45 ♜f1 ♜d5 46 ♜b7 e4!

Not the only continuation, but in won positions there is no need to draw up a full list of candidate moves. It is enough to single out a continuation you like, and work out its variations to the end.

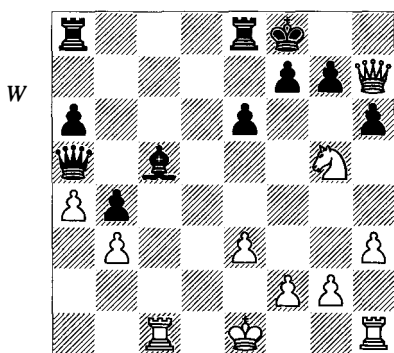
47 fxe4+ ♖xe4 48 ♜xc7 ♜f3 49 ♜xe7 ♜xf2+ 50 ♜e1 b2 51 ♜b7 ♜c2 52 c6 ♜g3

But not 52...♜c1+ 53 ♜d2 bl ♖?! 54 ♜xbl ♜xbl?? (54...♜xc6 is still winning for Black) 55 c7, and this pawn queens.

53 c7 f3 54 ♜d1 ♜xc7 55 ♜xb2 f2 0-1

(Now return to page 17.)

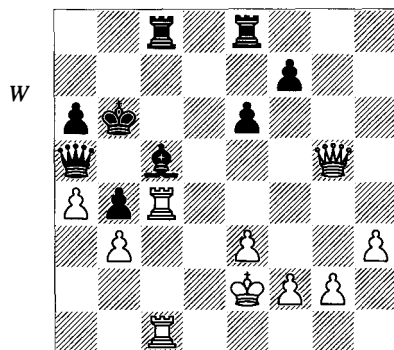
Exercise 15



Black expected 21 ♜e4(!), which he intended to meet with 21...♜ac8, banking on the trap 22 ♖h8+? ♜e7 23 ♖xg7 ♜d4!! However, 22 0-0! (or 22 ♜e2!) is strong, and indeed a rather clearer win than the move chosen, but both lines are good if followed up accurately.

To Schroeder's chagrin, Capablanca side-stepped the trap, although in a different way:

21 ♖h8+!? ♜e7 22 ♖xg7 hxg5 23 ♖xg5+ ♜d6 24 ♜e2!? ♜ac8 25 ♜c4 ♜c6 26 ♜hc1 ♜b6 (D)

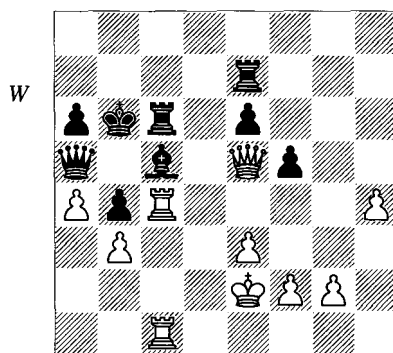


Let us consider this position from the standpoint of the principle of two weaknesses. We are struck by the ridiculous bunch of black pieces on the queenside, tied to the defence of the bishop on c5. This entanglement may be viewed as the first weakness. The game is decided by executing a second threat – on the kingside.

27 h4! f5

On 27...♜c7 White wins by 28 h5 ♜ec8 29 h6 ♜d6 30 ♖xa5+ ♜xa5 31 ♜xc7 ♜xc7 32 ♜xc7 ♜xc7 33 f4 ♜d8 34 g4 ♜f6 35 g5 ♜h8 36 e4 ♜b6 37 f5 exf5 38 exf5 ♜c5 39 g6.

28 ♖g7! ♜e7 29 ♖e5 ♜c6 (D)

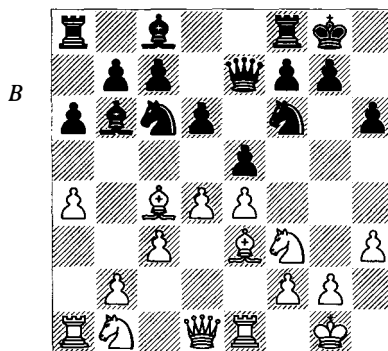


30 ♜xc5! 1-0

30...♜xc5 is met by 31 ♖d6+.

(Now return to page 17.)

Exercise 16



As a result of his unsure play in the opening phase, Black now has some serious problems to solve.

11...♖d8!

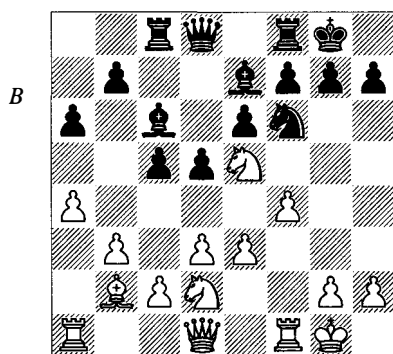
"The most difficult move in the whole game." (Alekhine).

Only a few moves earlier Black had played ...♖e7, so we can understand how hard it was psychologically for Alekhine to resolve on this continuation at the present moment. But now some problems arise for White. One of the principal ones is to decide on a place for his bishop, which stands well on c4.

Additional Exercise 16A: What would you play if you had White?

(For the answer, see page 40.)

Exercise 17



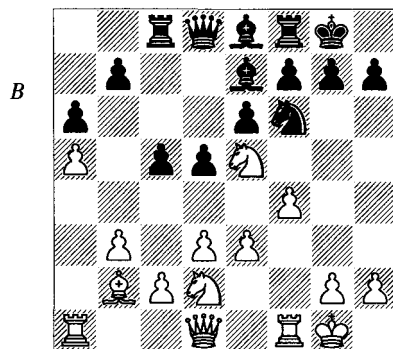
Black is close to equality.

12...♗e8!?

The main pride of White's position is the knight on e5, supported by the b2-bishop, but it is against these pieces that Black's schemes are directed first and foremost. Taimanov wishes to preserve his light-squared bishop, which, having no opposite number, can later become very active in both defence and attack. If White plays carelessly, he could even end up worse.

13 a5?! (D)

13 ♖f3 is better.



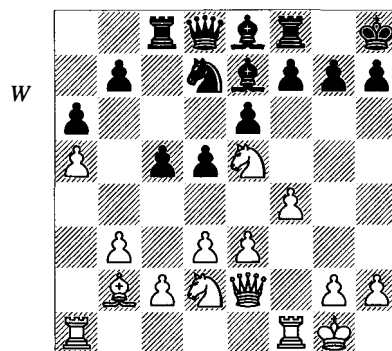
13...♗h8?!

The straightforward 13...♗d7 is probably a better way to seek equality.

14 ♖e2?!

Black's idea was 14 ♖f3 ♗d7 15 ♖g3 f6 16 ♖g4 ♖g8, but White has a pleasant choice between 17 ♗g6+ ♗xg6 18 ♖xg6, exchanging off the bishop after all, and 17 ♗ef3 ♗f7 18 e4 ♖c7 19 ♖h3, with some advantage either way.

14...♗d7 (D)

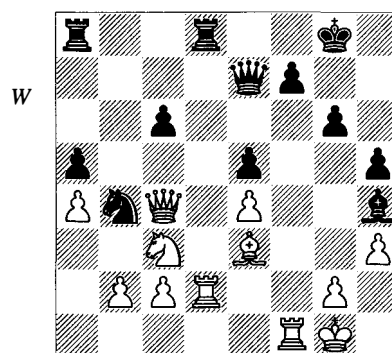


15 c4?

Additional Exercise 17A: How would you continue in Black's place?

(For the answer, see page 42.)

Exercise 18



Despite the apparent harmlessness of the position, White has a considerable plus. His pieces are more active, Black's kingside is weakened, and the coordination of the black pieces is disrupted. The correct plan for White is to prepare an attack on the king side by bringing his knight there, along the path b1-d2-f3-g5. *En route*, Black's outwardly active pieces will be pushed back.

24 ♗b1! ♖b7 25 ♗h2!

Removing the king from possible checks on the a7-g1 diagonal, and depriving the black bishop of the g3-square.

25...♟g7

Now or next move it would pay Black to exchange a pair of rooks, reducing the attacking potential of White's major pieces.

26 c3 ♖a6 27 ♜e2! ♜f8 28 ♜d2 ♙d8 29 ♜f3 f6 30 ♜d2!

Now that Black's kingside has been weakened still further, White returns to dispute the open d-file.

30...♙e7 31 ♜e6 ♜ad8 32 ♜xd8 ♙xd8

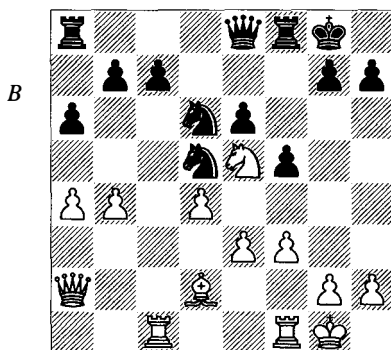
Or 32...♜xd8 33 ♜xe5.

33 ♜d1 ♜b8 34 ♙c5 ♜h8 35 ♜xd8 1-0

On 35...♜xd8 White has the decisive 36 ♙e7.

(Now return to page 19.)

Exercise 19



To answer this question, we turn again to Alexander Khalifman: "The main idea is not at all to advance with e4, which is only good for White in certain specific circumstances, but to activate the bishop before anything else."

In the game, there followed:

20...♜d8 21 ♜b3 c6 22 ♙e1 ♜e7 23 ♙f2

Of course the straightforward 23 ♙g3? would be bad on account of 23...f4.

23...♟h8?!

In fighting for the initiative, you must be resolute and ready to take risks!

The right plan is to bring about the ...e5 advance as soon as possible: 23...♜f7 24 ♜d3 (24 ♜c4 ♜xb4 25 ♜xb4 ♜xb4 26 ♜b1 ♜d3 27 ♜xb7 c5!) 24...e5 25 e4 fxe4 26 fxe4 ♜f4. White would then have a minimal edge, due mainly to the poor position of the knight on f7.

24 ♜d3!

Forestalling 24...♜f7, as White would then get in 25 e4 first.

24...♜g5?!

The least evil was 24...♜fe8 followed by ...♜f6, practically renouncing any counterplay. That would mean a significant plus for White.

25 ♜fe1 ♜fe8 26 ♙g3!

"The ideal set-up is achieved. Black has no defence against the many positional threats (chiefly 27 e4 and 27 ♜c5)" (Khalifman).

26...♜e7 27 e4 fxe4 28 fxe4 ♜b6 29 ♜c5 ♜f7

After 29...♜d7 White would have the pleasant choice between 30 d5 and 30 ♙xd6 ♜xd6 31 ♜xb7 ♜xd4+ 32 ♟h1 ♜b8 33 ♜ed1 ♜a7 34 ♜d6.

30 a5 ♜c8 31 d5!

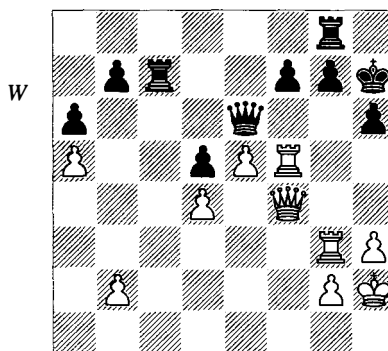
"The breakthrough in the centre is decisive. At this point I didn't even have to calculate variations; the placing of all White's pieces is too good" (Khalifman).

31...cxd5 32 exd5 e5 33 ♜e6 ♜d7 34 ♙xe5 ♜xe5 35 ♜xe5 ♜d6 36 ♜ce1 ♜f6 37 ♜d3 ♜f7 38 h3 h6 39 ♜g5! ♜f2+ 40 ♟h2 hxg5 41 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 42 ♜xe8+ ♜f8 43 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 44 d6 1-0

After 44...♜f4+ 45 g3 ♜f2+ 46 ♟h1 ♜e1+ 47 ♟g2 the checks run out.

(Now return to page 19.)

Exercise 20

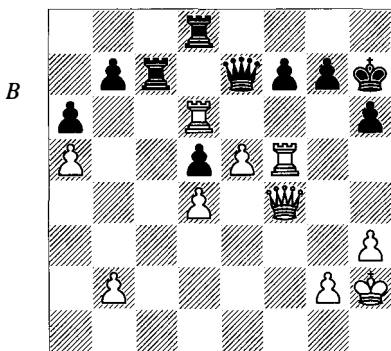


White has a very large advantage, owing primarily to the activity of his pieces directed against his opponent's king.

However, tactical thrusts like 39 ♜f6? gxf6 40 ♜xg8 ♟xg8 41 exf6 ♜c6 or 39 ♜xg7+? ♜xg7 40 ♜f6 ♜c2! are clearly premature.

Believe it or not, White concluded the struggle in a mere four(!) moves.

39 ♖b3! ♖d8 40 ♖b6 ♖e7 41 ♖d6 (D)



41...♖dd7?!

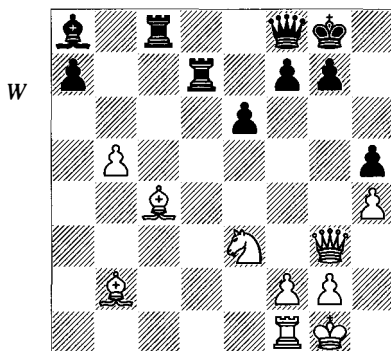
41...f6 can be met by 42 ♖dx6! gxf6 43 exf6 and Black will have to give back the rook to avoid more serious trouble, leading to a very bad rook ending.

42 ♖h5! 1-0

There is no satisfactory defence against 43 ♖dxh6+.

(Now return to page 19.)

Exercise 21



You were right if you decided that White has a won position and suggested bringing the rook over to the kingside, where the main concluding events should unfold.

31 ♖a1! ♖e4 32 ♖a5!

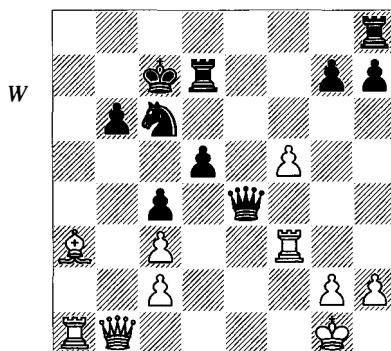
This move, aiming to switch the rook to g5, is even stronger than 32 ♖a3.

32...♖dc7 33 b6 axb6 34 ♖g5!

The result is that White's piece activity has become overwhelming. The remaining moves were:

34...♖g6 35 ♖xe6 fxe6 36 ♖xg6 ♖f7 37 ♖e5 ♖c1+ 38 ♖h2 ♖e7 39 ♖g5 ♖d7 40 ♖xh5 ♖d3 41 ♖g5 ♖h7 42 ♖g4 ♖c4 43 ♖xg7! 1-0
(Now return to page 19.)

Exercise 22



The basic strategic factor is Black's weakened king position, which is being unmistakably eyed by White's a1-rook and his queen. The f3-rook not only defends its own king, but is also ready to support its colleague in the attack when the moment comes – for instance after White plays f6.

But what is the bishop's role? Once this piece joins in the fight, the outcome of the game is settled at once.

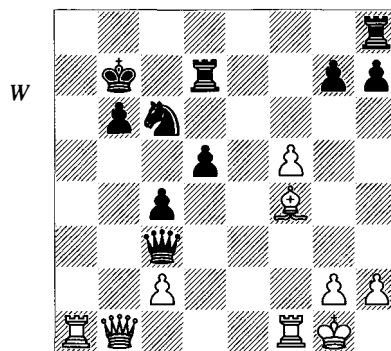
27 ♖c1!

Not only threatening 28 ♖f4+ but also clearing the a-file for the rook.

27...♖e1+

The retort 27...♖e5 doesn't help: 28 ♖f4 ♖e8 29 ♖b5.

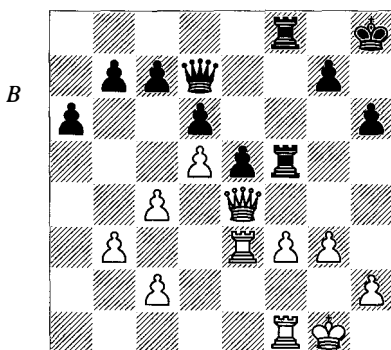
28 ♖f1 ♖xc3 29 ♖f4+ ♖b7 (D)



30 ♖b5! 1-0

(Now return to page 20.)

Exercise 23



White's space advantage compensates for Black's pressure against the weak f3-pawn and the loose white kingside. The game is roughly equal, and the main question is how to produce practical chances. From a two-weaknesses viewpoint, Black can seek a further target on the queenside. The black rooks have no better place than the f-file, so queen or pawn moves should be considered.

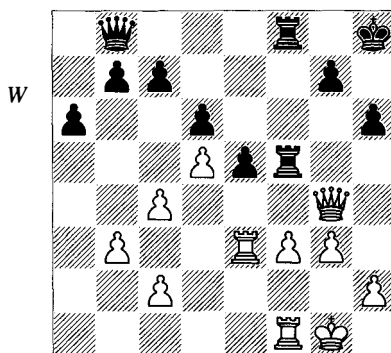
29...♖d8!?

It looks as if Black is preparing to bring his queen to g5. Another idea is 29...h5, focusing attention more firmly on the kingside.

30 ♖g4

30 b4!? prepares to meet 30...♖b8 with 31 c5, preferring to allow 30...♖g5.

30...♖b8!? (D)

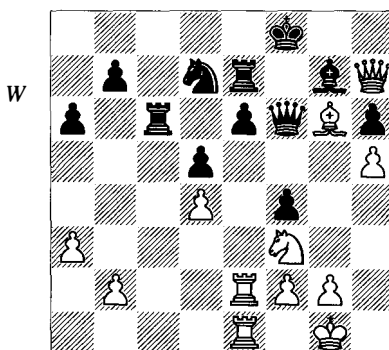


31 ♖g2 ♖a7 32 ♖fe1 ♖c5 33 ♖e4 ♖b4

By transferring to his queen to the queenside, Black seeks to create a second weakness, which he achieved by advancing his a-pawn. White should still be able to maintain the balance, but he later went astray and lost.

(Now return to page 21.)

Exercise 24



"A picturesque position has come about, in which Black has no useful moves but White needs to free his queen in order to strike." (Smyslov). It is clear that Smyslov regards his queen as his 'worst' piece; indeed, not only is it inactive, but it is in danger of being trapped.

32 ♖b1!?

The attempt to improve White's position more quietly with 32 g3?! fxg3 33 ♖g2 is met by 33...gxf2 34 ♖xf2 ♖f4! 35 ♖e5 ♖xf2+ 36 ♖xf2 ♖f6, when Black is OK.

While the text-move prepares a strong regrouping, 32 ♖f5! is even more effective, as it keeps the bishop active and e6 under pressure.

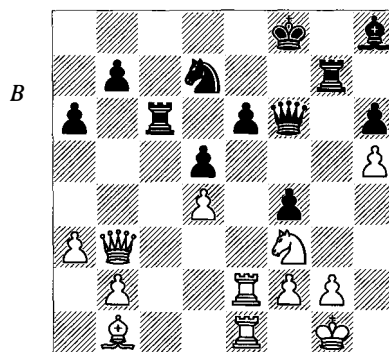
32...♖h8

On 32...♖c4 White has 33 ♖a2 followed by 34 ♖xd5.

33 ♖d3 ♖g7

Or 33...♖f7 34 ♖h4!.

34 ♖b3 (D)



The transfer of the queen to the queenside decides the game. It is not in Black's power to defend both sectors of the board.

34...♖b6

Or 34...b5 35 a4.

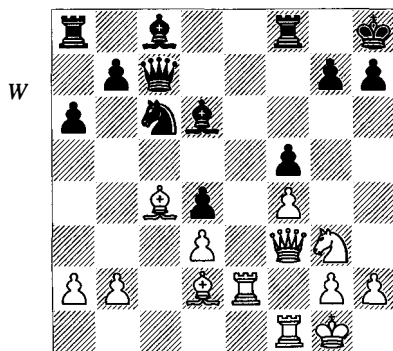
35 ♖c3 ♜g8

If 35...♜c6 then 36 ♖b4+.

36 ♖c8+ 1-0

(Now return to page 21.)

Exercise 25



I think the verdict is obvious: White is considerably better, in view of the greater activity of his pieces and Black's somewhat insecure king, which has no square to move to. Now that we know about the principle of the 'worst' piece, it isn't hard to see that what White must do first of all is improve the position of his knight.

18 ♞h1!!

The knight is heading for g5. It would not be so dangerous on that square if it could be expelled by ...h6. But that move would contain no threat, since if Black took the knight, the white queen would join the attack decisively via the h-file!

18...♙d7 19 ♞f2 ♜ae8 20 ♜fe1 ♜xe2 21 ♜xe2 ♞d8?!

It is no use playing 21...♜e8 on account of 22 ♖d5. Yet it was worth considering 21...g6! with the idea of meeting 22 ♞h3? with 22...h6. Even then, though, by continuing 22 h4 (instead of 22 ♞h3?) followed by h5, White would retain a noticeable plus.

22 ♞h3 ♙c6

If 22...♜e8 then 23 ♜xe8+ ♙xe8 24 ♖d5.

23 ♖h5 g6 24 ♖h4 ♙g7 25 ♖f2! ♙c5

25...♖b6 can be met by 26 ♖el or 26 b4!?, with 27 ♙c3 to follow, when the d4-pawn cannot be held.

26 b4 ♙b6?

26...♙e7 is necessary. After 27 ♖xd4+ ♙f6 28 ♖c5 b6 29 ♖f2 b5 30 ♙b3 ♜e8 Black has

some positional compensation for the lost pawn, and at any rate better survival chances than he should have had after the text-move.

27 ♖h4?

The manoeuvres of White's queen make a powerful impression. Now that the dark-squared bishop cannot defend e7, the queen returns to its former post. However, Black is now able to put up resistance, whereas 27 ♖el! wins in straightforward fashion, since the trick 27...♙e4 does not hold the position together for long after 28 ♞f2 intending ♙b3.

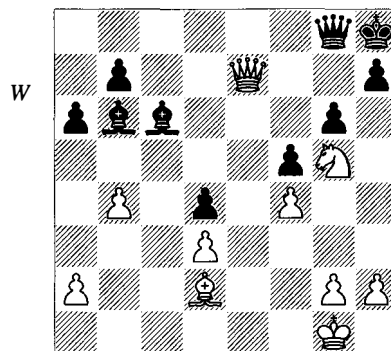
27...♜e8

He can't save himself by 27...♜f6? in view of 28 ♞g5 h6 29 ♞h7!.

28 ♜e5! ♞f7?

After 28...♜e5? 29 fxe5, the bishop on d2 joins in the attack with decisive effect. 28...♖d7 is essential, meeting 29 g4 with the solid 29...h6. White retains the initiative, but there is everything to play for. Note that the immediate 28...h6? is strongly met by 29 a4!, disrupting Black's coordination in lines like 29...♙xa4 30 b5! ♖d7 31 ♖el ♜xe5 32 fxe5, when all White's pieces are participating in the attack.

29 ♙xf7 ♖xf7 30 ♞g5 ♖g8 31 ♜xe8 ♙xe8?! 32 ♖e1! ♙c6 33 ♖e7+ ♙h8 (D)



Again we shall have recourse to the principle of the 'worst' piece. In contrast to the superb placing of White's queen and knight, his bishop is idle. For that reason there followed:

34 b5!

White's advantage is so large that it should come as no surprise that there is an alternative solution: 34 ♞e6! (threatening 35 ♖f6+) 34...h5 (34...h6 35 ♖f6+ ♙h7 36 ♞f8+) 35 ♖f6+ ♙h7 36 g4!! and White wins.

34...♖g7

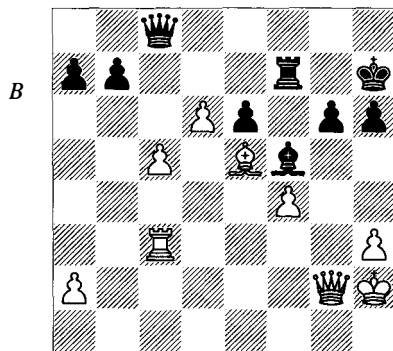
White also wins after 34...axb5 35 ♖e6 h5 (the only way to continue) 36 ♜f6+ ♗h7 37 ♜g5+ ♗h6 38 ♙b4, with 39 ♙f8+ to follow.

After 35 ♜xg7+ Black still tried to resist, but with a piece less, he naturally lost.

(Now return to page 21.)

Solutions to Additional Exercises

Additional Exercise 2A



39...♜c6

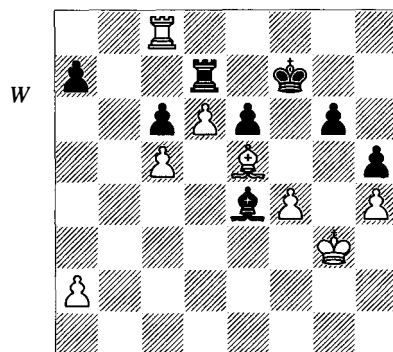
This leads to a dismal endgame for Black, but he had no defence. 39...♜d7 40 c6 bxc6 offers no salvation, although you may have seen a glimmer of hope in 41 ♜xc6?! ♜b7 42 ♜c7? (42 ♜h1! is still good for White) 42...♜xg2+ 43 ♜xg2 ♜xc7 44 dxc7 ♙e4+!. However, 41 ♜b3! intending ♜b2 wins by force; e.g., 41...♜b7 42 ♜xb7+ ♜xb7 43 ♜d2 ♜d7 44 ♜b2 ♜c8 45 ♜f2 ♜d7 46 ♜h4 threatening ♜e7+.

40 ♜xc6 bxc6 41 h4 ♙g8

Or 41...♜b7 42 ♜b3.

42 ♜b3 ♜d7 43 ♜b8+ ♙f7 44 ♜c8 ♙e4 45 ♙g3 h5 (D)

If 45...♜b7 then 46 ♜c7+.



46 ♙f2

White's last piece joins in the fight, with decisive effect.

46...♙d5 47 ♙e3 ♙g2 48 ♙d4 ♙f3 49 ♙h8 e5+

Alas, this is forced. After 49...♙d5 50 ♙e5 ♙f3 51 ♙g7! (threatening 52 ♙h6 and 53 ♜f8#) 51...♙xg7 52 ♜c7, White wins.

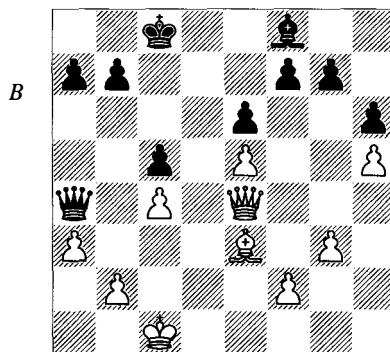
50 ♙xe5 ♙d5 51 ♙f6 ♙f3 52 ♙g5 ♙g7 53 f5! ♙g4

Or 53...gxf5 54 ♜c7.

54 f6+ ♙f7 55 ♜xc6 1-0

(Now return to page 10.)

Additional Exercise 5A



26...♙c7?

A typical mistake by a player on the defensive (there was another case of it in our foregoing example). Black does what he would like to do, not what he still has the opportunity to do. It was essential to keep his queen in an active position with 26...♙e7!, preparing to sacrifice a pawn if appropriate in order to create counterplay: 27 ♜g4 (or 27 ♜f4) 27...♙g5.

In answer to 26...♙e7 White's best option would be to aim not for material gains but for a kingside pawn advance with 27 f4! (intending f5) 27...♙c7 28 g4.

27 ♜f4! ♜d7

After 27...♙e7 28 ♜xf7 ♜xc4+ 29 ♙d2 ♜d5+ 30 ♙e1 ♜h1+ 31 ♙e2 the checks come to an end.

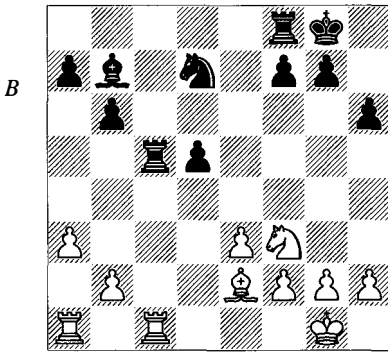
28 b3! ♙d8 29 ♙c2 ♙e8 30 ♜e4 ♙e7 31 g4 ♜c7 32 f4 ♙h4 33 ♙d3! b6 34 f5 ♙g3 35 fxe6 fxe6 36 ♜g6+ ♙f8 37 ♜xe6 ♙xe5 38 ♙e4 ♙h2 39 ♙f5 ♙g3 40 ♙d2! ♙h2 41 ♙c3

Now the threat of 42 ♙g6 becomes lethal. Black played 41...♜f7+ and then resigned,

since after the queen exchange and ♔e4-d5, the bishop endgame is completely hopeless for him.

(Now return to page 11.)

Additional Exercise 11A



We shall now go more deeply into the evaluation of the position and elaborate the answers, which have to be linked to the problem of exchanging.

Let us take things in order. True to our system, we start by singling out the most salient strategic factor in the position before us. This, as we can see without difficulty, is Black's isolated pawn on d5 in a position approaching the endgame. And at this point we simply have to turn for help to our 'library' of knowledge (so much the better if it is well organized). What will it suggest to us?

We will find our bearings step by step (while looking at the position from the defender's side). All endgames are of course worse for Black. But what interests us is which ones are lost and which can be saved. Let us assume that the d4-square in front of the pawn will most likely be occupied by the white king, in which case the d5-pawn automatically becomes Black's 'first weakness'.

Well then, what about king and pawn endings? Win or draw? Our 'library' delivers this answer: pawn endings are specific and concrete, therefore only a precise analysis of the position will be able to help us.

What about minor-piece endings? We shall take knight endgames first. Here the draw should be attainable in most cases without undue effort, since even if the white king is on the blockading square d4, it won't be able to maintain

itself there for long (in view of a check from the enemy knight). It follows that even the opponent's first weakness cannot realistically be placed under an enduring attack.

And bishop endings? We are only interested in bishops of the same colour – specifically, light-squared ones. If a win is to be achieved here, then in addition to the d5-pawn, the stronger side needs to be able to exploit a second weakness (a black pawn fixed on a light square) in a different sector of the board.

Endings with 'good' knight against 'bad' bishop? Here too, the verdict depends crucially on whether a second weakness exists.

So much for minor-piece endings – the time has now come to talk about rook endings. What information on them does our 'library' give us? Answer: these are the most difficult for the defending side, though an important question is where the rooks are placed for the defence. The most unfavourable position is behind their pawn. Defending from the side (from c5 in the case of a d5-pawn) is better. Generally speaking, however, the most appropriate message is that when defending an isolated pawn, the rooks should simply be exchanged!

In this way it sometimes happens in chess that reflections of a general nature, which look completely abstract, will give the answers we are looking for. If you have been paying attention, everything should become clear. To Ivanchuk's brilliant attempt to keep the rooks on with 17 ♖cc1!, it was imperative for Aronian to make an equally fitting reply, exchanging both pairs of rooks by 17...♙xc1+! 18 ♙xc1 ♙c8. After that, a draw would be the most likely outcome.

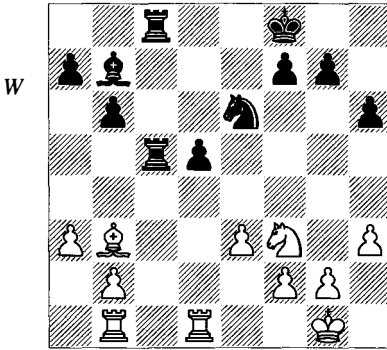
Perhaps Black simply didn't want to defend an ending with an isolated pawn and no chance at all of any counterplay. But playing a lost position instead is surely no better. In this context we cannot help recalling the words of the fourth World Champion, Alexander Alekhine: "In my opinion no chess-player should be afraid of simplifying in order to solve the problem of winning (or drawing). Playing to complicate the position is an extreme measure, to which a player should only resort when he fails to find a clear and logical plan!"

In the game, there followed:

17...♙xc8? 18 ♙d1! ♙c2 19 ♙b5! ♙f8 20 ♙ab1!

So White has managed to keep all the rooks on the board! Black has a grim defensive task ahead of him.

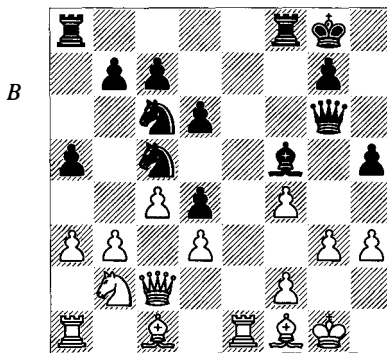
20...♖c7 21 ♖a4 ♜e6 22 ♖b3 ♜f8 23 h3 ♜c5 (D)



Additional Exercise 11B: How would you now continue for White?

(For the answer, see page 39.)

Additional Exercise 12A

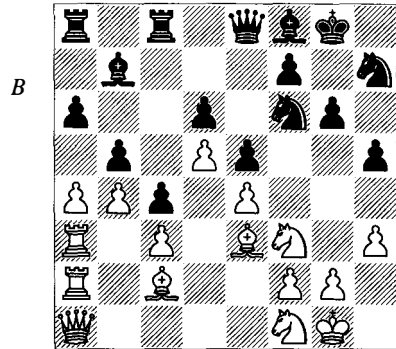


I hope you weren't confused by White's extra pawn. In return for it, Black's pieces are much more actively placed. True, if Black fights for the only open file directly with 18...♖fe8?, then after 19 ♖d2 this merely leads to rook exchanges that are no use to him. The sooner we understand that the open file – such an important strategic factor in other cases – has no appreciable significance here, the sooner we will find the correct solution. It is essential to identify the most vulnerable point in White's camp. And this point is ... the pawn on b3. Once we see this, it isn't hard to find the continuation that occurred in the game:

18...♖a6! 19 ♖d2?! ♜b6!

Underlining Black's substantial plus.

But let us come back to the Fischer-Spassky game, after White's 27 ♜f1 (D).

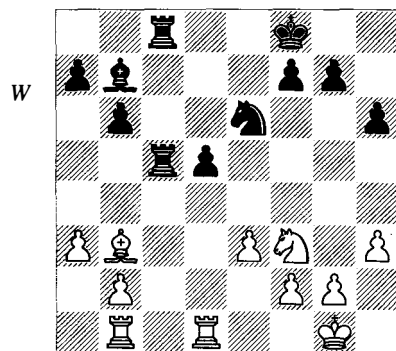


When analysing what happened, I couldn't rid myself of the impression that Spassky had displayed weak prophylactic thinking and had only grasped his opponent's intention after 29 ♜b1! occurred. But alas, by then it was too late.

Additional Exercise 12B: Try to correct Boris Spassky's mistake. How do you prevent Bobby Fischer's idea from being implemented as it was in the game, assuming that you discern it as soon as 27 ♜f1 is played?

(For the answer, see page 40.)

Additional Exercise 11B



By this time Black has been able to discover (albeit belatedly!) that exchanging even just one pair of rooks would bring him some relief. For that reason White played, of course, not 24 ♜d2? ♜c1+, but:

24 ♜h2!

The game continued:

24...♙e7 25 ♖d2 ♜b5 26 ♙a2 ♜bc5 27 ♜e1
a5 28 ♜bd1 ♜d8 29 ♙g3 ♜b5 30 f3 ♜c8?

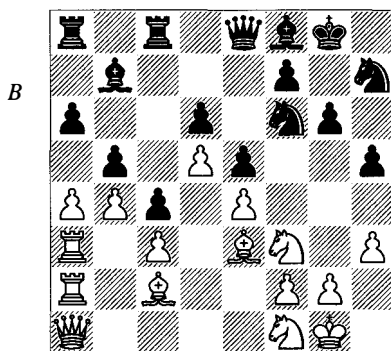
30...♜c5 or 30...♜c5!? is better.

31 ♜d3 d4 32 ♙xe6 ♙xe6 33 ♜f4+ ♙e7 34
♜xd4

Winning a pawn and, soon afterwards, the game.

(Now return to page 13.)

Additional Exercise 12B

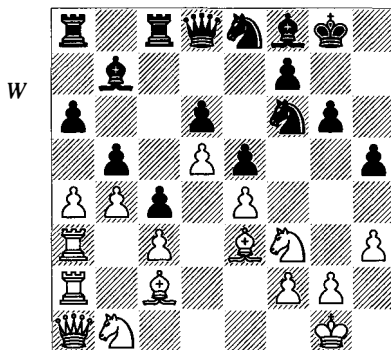


By the time White's attack on the most vulnerable point (the b5-pawn) started, Black needed to be ready to parry it, and this requires e8 to be available to his knights.

27...♙d8!

White has additional ideas of axb5 and ♖a5 now that b5 is undefended, but these are less menacing than the plan that Black faced in the game. Against the ♜b1 idea, he now has the following defence:

28 ♜1d2 ♜e8! 29 ♜b1 ♜hf6! (D)

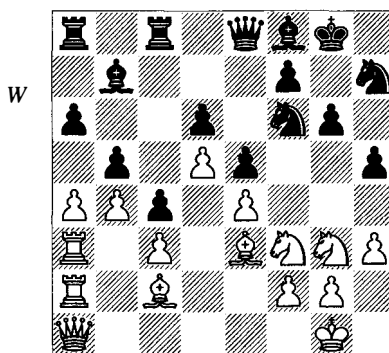


There can now follow:

30 axb5 axb5 31 ♖a7 ♖xa7 32 ♖xa7 ♖a8 33
♖xa8 ♖xa8 34 ♖xa8 ♙xa8 35 ♜a3 ♜c7! 36
♙b6 ♜fe8!

By a colossal effort in which every tempo counted, but just in time nonetheless, Black has succeeded in holding the critical point b5, completely neutralizing White's advantage.

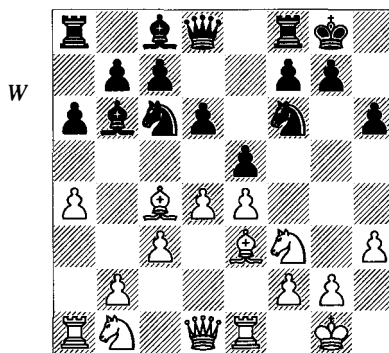
But here again the 'worm of doubt' would not leave me in peace. As already noted, in the position we started from (before 27 ♜f1), White had an indisputable positional plus.



Additional Exercise 12C: In place of 27 ♜f1, couldn't Fischer have played more strongly?

(For the answer, see page 41.)

Additional Exercise 16A



On the one hand, White has to cope with the idea of 12...exd4 13 cxd4 d5, which would be a good reply to 12 ♜bd2, for instance (while the standard exchanging combination 12...exd4 13 cxd4 ♜xe4 is another possibility). For this reason White's best continuation at this juncture is 12 ♙b3, after which the position should be recognized as *approximately equal*.

However, Black's last move, 11...♙d8!, evidently came as a complete surprise to Tarrasch, and he replied:

12 ♙d3

Voluntarily withdrawing pieces from active posts is in most cases unacceptable when a fight for the initiative is in progress.

12...♖e8 13 ♖bd2 ♗a7

An anticipatory measure. Black withdraws his bishop from a potential attack by White's knight.

14 ♜c2 exd4 15 ♖xd4

Forced, for the sake of the light-squared bishop: if 15 cxd4 then 15...♖b4.

15...♗e5 16 ♗f1

Insipid play by White and purposeful play by his opponent have brought about a significant improvement in Black's position. Consequently Alekhine proceeds with aggressive tactical operations. Nevertheless, White still has adequate resources; it is his negative frame of mind rather than his current position that dooms him.

16...d5! 17 ♖ad1 c5 18 ♖4b3 ♜c7 19 ♗f4

19 exd5!? ♖xd5 20 ♖c4 ♖xc4 is an alternative that White could consider, since he can play 21 ♗f4! rather than 21 ♗xc4?! ♖xe3 22 ♗xe3 ♗xe3 23 fxe3 ♗d7, when Black's advantage is obvious.

19...♖f3+ 20 ♖xf3 ♜xf4 21 exd5?

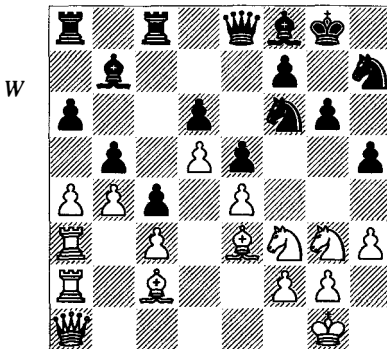
21 e5 is a much better try.

21...♗f5 22 ♗d3 ♗xh3! 23 gxh3 ♜xf3

And Black soon achieved victory.

(Now return to page 18.)

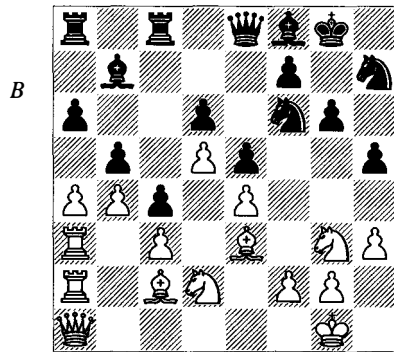
Additional Exercise 12C



From the very posing of the question, the attentive reader may have deduced the answer. We observed that in playing 27 ♖f1 Fischer was most likely guided by the principle of the 'worst' piece. The splendid idea that he proceeded to execute could only be carried out

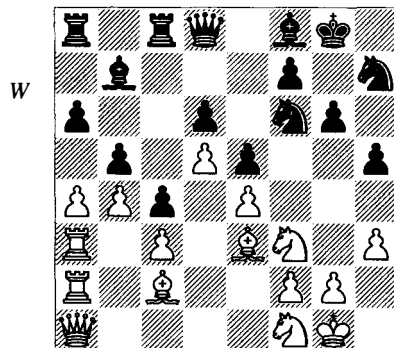
thanks to Black's inattentive reply 27...♗e7?. Now suppose that he had conceived this idea before playing 27 ♖f1, and had also discovered Black's defence (which, as we noticed, succeeds only just in time). Then the question arises: how is White to gain the extra tempo that he needs?

The answer isn't difficult to find. The execution of White's planned raid should have been started with the other knight: **27 ♖d2! (D).**



To reach the required square a3, this knight will take that one vital tempo less. Here too, of course, White would need to look at the desperate sacrifice 27...♗e4, but it presents no danger to him, owing (for instance) to the variation 28 ♖xe4 f5 29 ♖g5 f4 30 ♖xh7 fxe3?? 31 ♖f6+. From this it becomes obvious that Spassky's earlier move 26...♗e8? was the decisive mistake.

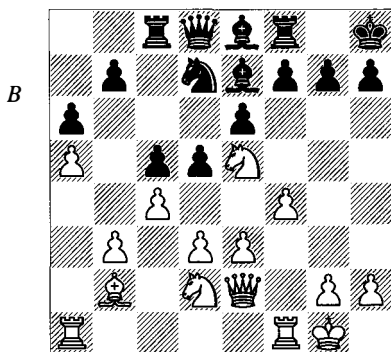
But this story can be extended still further. One more question occurred to me after performing the above analysis. After the moves 27 ♖f1?! ♗d8! (D), knowing his pugnacious character, surely Fischer would not have acquiesced in concluding the game peacefully?



Additional Exercise 12D: In Fischer's place, what would you have played after the moves in question (27 ♖f1 ♔d8)?

(For the answer, see page 42.)

Additional Exercise 17A



White's last move (15 c2-c4) reveals that he has lost control of events and with it his objectivity in assessing the position. (His system of self-discipline – 'STOPS', as described in the next chapter – is dislocated.) Taking into account Black's next move, White should have refrained from sharpening the play and preferred to exchange with 15 ♖xd7!.

15...♖b8!!

The situation now before us is characterized by what in Mark Dvoretsky's terminology is called a 'superfluous piece'. We are not of course talking of an extra piece in the arithmetical sense, but of a case where several pieces on the same side would like to occupy one and the same square on the board. If one of them does occupy it, the others will suffer – that is, they will prove in a way 'superfluous', abandoned and forgotten.

There are two ways out of this kind of predicament:

1) For as long as possible, refrain from occupying the key square with any of the pieces that are 'interested' in it – until the course of events indicates more or less precisely which particular piece ought to go there; or

2) Reduce the number of 'superfluous' pieces by exchanges, thereby lessening the 'tension' around the key square.

With this in mind, it becomes clear that in the position before White's 15th move, the f3-square was in too great demand, while the two white knights, a rook and in some eventualities the white queen are 'superfluous'. This is why White should have exchanged his e5-knight on d7.

Now the action of the black pieces starts to remind you of a recoiling spring, dealing an extremely strong blow to the opponent.

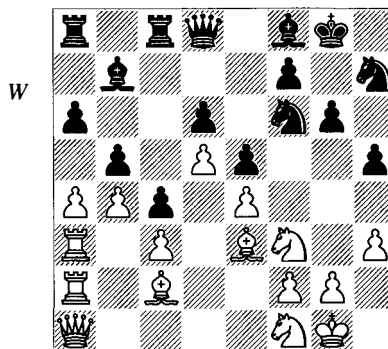
16 cxd5 exd5 17 e4 f6! 18 ♖ef3 ♖c6 19 ♖h4 dxe4 20 dxe4 ♖d4

Black has attained a noticeable plus thanks to White's offside knight on h4 and the opening of the position, which will allow his bishops to develop their full power.

Let us reconsider the course of this game. White played some moves that were 'good' in themselves (13 a5, 14 ♔e2, 15 c4), except that they were not coordinated in their effects. Meanwhile Black, implementing a deeply thought-out regrouping of his pieces, prepared himself excellently for the ensuing tactical clash.

(Now return to page 19.)

Additional Exercise 12D



It seems to me that the idea of securing victory by force has to be abandoned (if only for a time), but the original advantages of White's position still remain. He needs to carry on manoeuvring positionally ('tacking'), for example with **28 ♖3d2** followed by **29 f3**. In that case Black would have to continue walking on hot coals.

(Now return to page 14.)

2 'STOPS' – A System of Self-Discipline in Chess

Murphy's law: 'If anything unpleasant can happen, it will.'

Having been quite an active chess-player in my time, and afterwards a no less active coach, I have constantly come up against the question of the *optimum* way to prepare a contestant for a game. I have had to resort to improvisation, which is good and even necessary for a coach who is starting out, but an experienced pedagogue ought to have his own set of methods. The question therefore became pressing – what advice should I give my pupils to help them prepare for play, retain control over events during the game, and conduct a psychological investigation afterwards?

The system that I now wish to share with you emerged as the result of my thinking over a long period. The acronym which forms its name is an easy word to remember – STOPS. The letters stand for the components of the system.

S: self-control

What do we understand by this?

1) *Control over the course of events in the game.*

Unfortunately, it can happen that the course of events changes to our detriment. Then it is especially important that we objectively appraise and anticipate the direction the game is taking, and try to steer it into the channel we require.

2) *Control of thinking time.*

Getting into time-trouble is extremely undesirable – I would even say impermissible. It often pays to take a decision that objectively is not the best, rather than use up half an hour finding the correct answer to some question of secondary importance (such as whether to station your

rooks on e1 and d1, or d1 and c1) and practically guaranteeing that you will slip into time-trouble – when the probability of errors significantly rises, even for strong and experienced players.

On the other hand, hasty, unreflecting and impulsive play is also a fault.

Judicious expenditure of the time allotted for the game is a sign of a player's practical strength, and this also needs to be learnt. How? For example, by recording the thinking times so that you can later analyse not only the quality and strength of the individual moves, but also the appropriateness of the amounts of time taken over them.

T: tactics

Even in simple situations, tactical peculiarities must always be taken into account. In very sharp or 'irrational' positions, our sense of danger needs to be particularly keen.

O: objective evaluation

The act of evaluating a position is of the essence of chess. Any variation that we calculate starts out from an evaluation, and culminates in one.

A lack of objectivity in evaluating the situation on the board is inadmissible. The consequence of overrating our position (for instance, by considering it superior when it is equal) is that, in our search for an imaginary advantage, the calculation of variations senselessly takes up large amounts of time and energy. All sorts of hallucinations tend to creep into our head, and the likelihood of mistaken decisions sharply increases.

Underrating our position (for instance, by believing it equal, when it is better) is also

highly undesirable. On working out a line and finding that it leads to equality, we may be satisfied with this and leave a stronger continuation unexamined.

P: prophylactic thinking

This term, introduced by Mark Dvoretsky, denotes *the need, and the ability, to look at the position through the eyes of your opponent*, thereby anticipating his intentions and steering the course of events to your own advantage.

It was above all thanks to this ability that Anatoly Karpov in his best years considerably surpassed his rivals. People said jokingly that he would parry a threat five moves before his opponent thought of it, and the joke was well-founded.

S: staying calm

This is another factor that ought to be under our control during a game. All competitors in sport are familiar with a surge of excitement before a contest. This is normal even, if you like, essential. It is a different matter when the strain is so great as to make the table shake. The converse is absolute tranquillity, total inhibition – when the progress of the struggle in the game and tournament is a matter of near indifference. In such a state of mind, decisions are taken superficially, quickly and impulsively, which naturally affects the quality and result of the game.

The 'STOPS' system can be applied before and during a game and also, most importantly, after it. To assess the various aspects of a player's performance, I propose the following points system: 6 points – excellent; 5 – very good; 4 – good; 3 – satisfactory; 2 – mediocre; 1 – bad; 0 – very bad.

By conducting an analysis with reference to all five components of the system, we can draw a general conclusion about a finished game and prescribe any suitable corrective measures.

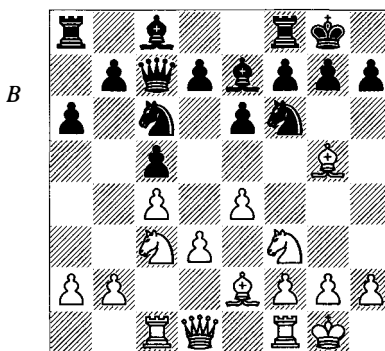
To discuss the application of the 'STOPS' system, we shall take the following two examples.

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1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 c4 ♘c6 4 ♘c3 a6 5 ♙e2
♙c7 6 0-0 ♘f6 7 d3

White deliberately refrains from the thematic 7 d4. He doesn't aspire to a big opening advantage but puts the emphasis on the middlegame struggle.

7...♙e7 8 ♙g5 0-0 9 ♖c1 (D)



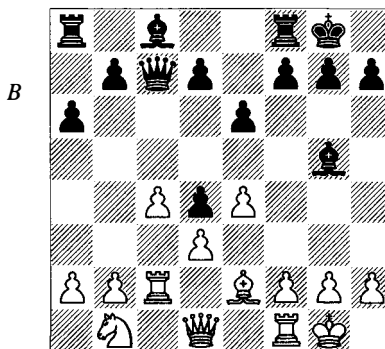
9...♘d4?!

Lulled by the passive conduct of the opening, Black takes a very committal decision. A *change in the pawn-structure must always be extremely carefully weighed*. In this case, the doubling of Black's pawns suits his opponent.

10 ♘xd4 cxd4

Now the unprotected position of the g5-bishop comes into play. Mindful of this, I considered the variation 11 ♘b1 ♘g4!? 12 ♙xg4 ♙xg5 13 ♖c2 but chose the following sequence instead:

11 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 12 ♘b1 ♙g5 13 ♖c2 (D)



On the face of it, what difference is there between this line and the other one I considered?

None at all, you might say. The only thing is that White's bishop is on e2, not g4. Yet this very circumstance is what invites Black to go into action.

13...f5?

Hooray! He fell for it! In playing 'actively', Black is clearly *not being objective in his assessment of the position*. With his backward queenside development, he had no business complicating matters in the centre and on the kingside. True, even after the strongest response, 13...b6 14 g3 d6 15 f4 ♖e7 16 ♖f3 ♖b7 17 ♘d2, White would have a plus, but not such a big one as in the game.

14 exf5 ♖xf5 15 ♖f3 ♖d8?!

By neglecting his queenside development, Black is patently *losing control of the situation on the board*.

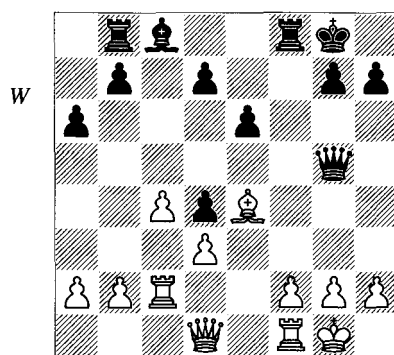
16 ♘d2 ♖xd2 17 ♖xd2 ♖g5?

Replacing strategy with traps. Maybe White will blunder into 18...♖xf3 19 ♖xf3 ♖xd2.

18 ♖c2 ♖b8

At last Black has remembered about his queenside, but isn't it too late?

19 ♖e4 ♖f8 (D)



20 f4!

Here is the first punch on the jaw. If Black had foreseen this move, I imagine he would have refrained from the pseudo-active 17...♖g5.

20...♖c5?!

He can't play 20...♖xf4? in view of 21 ♖xf4 ♖xf4 22 ♖h5 g6 23 ♖xg6 hxg6 24 ♖xg6+ ♖h8 25 ♖f2 ♖e3 26 ♖e8+ ♖h7 27 ♖f7+ ♖h8 28 ♖f8+ ♖h7 29 ♖h1, and Black is crushed. However, the more modest 20...♖e7 is preferable to the move played, although in that case too Black would emerge a pawn down in the end.

21 a3!?

Obviously expecting the following reply:

21...a5?!

Control over the course of events has passed completely out of Black's hands; his actions are dictated by his opponent.

22 b4!

Here is the second punch. It could also have been delivered a move earlier, but I felt like arranging everything in the most comfortable way possible, opening the a-file for myself as an extra luxury.

22...axb4 23 axb4 ♖e7

Black could hardly be happy with 23...♖xb4 24 ♖h5 g6 25 ♖xg6 hxg6 26 ♖xg6+ ♖h8 27 ♖e2, followed by ♖e5 or ♖f3, with a winning attack.

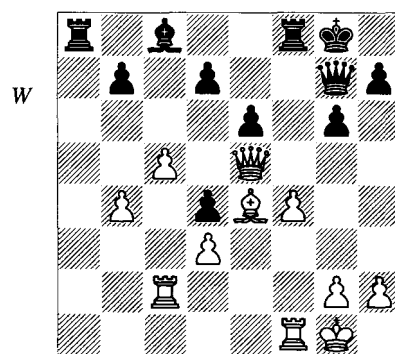
24 ♖h5! g6 25 ♖e5!

And this already is the knock-out! The pawn on d4 is lost, and with it all Black's chances of salvation. To my enjoyment, though, the struggle still continued.

25...♖a8 26 c5

Of course, White needs to take the d4-pawn for free; not 26 ♖xd4? ♖xb4.

26...♖g7 (D)



Caution! The position is technically won for White – so much is clear. But in these cases, precision and accuracy are always called for. The opponent has gone to ground: outwardly he is submitting, yet he doesn't resign. That means he is counting on a mistake, setting a trap, laying a mine that needs to be detected and defused in time.

White has a choice of ways to pick up the pawn on d4. He can do it either after a queen exchange – 27 ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 28 ♖c4 – or at once, with 27 ♖c4.

Exercise 26: Choose between those two continuations.

(For the answer, see page 50.)

Now let us return to the 'STOPS' system and analyse Black's performance first – even though of course it isn't easy for me to give an objective appraisal of my opponent's mental processes. Here we go:

S: self-control

The thinking time was under control (in this game there was no time-trouble for either Black or White). However, the course of events in the game was not under Black's control at all. Our verdict is: bad – 1 point.

T: tactics

We saw a fair number of gross tactical miscalculations and oversights (allowing the moves 20 f4, 22 b4, 24 ♖h5 and 25 ♖e5), which ultimately decided the outcome of the game. Verdict: bad, 1 point.

O: objective evaluation

What objectivity can we speak of? Black took some highly superficial, impulsive decisions (first he groundlessly brought about a change in the pawn-structure with 9... ♟d4?!, then later, with his queenside undeveloped, he began a confrontation on the kingside and in the centre with 13... f5?), which clearly did not tally with an objective assessment of the position. Verdict: very bad, 0 points.

P: prophylactic thinking

Here too, everything is clear. Very bad, 0 points.

S: staying calm

This is where I cannot give you an accurate picture. During the game my opponent maintained an inscrutable air (which is how a professional *ought* to conduct himself in any situation), even though the events on the chessboard cannot have pleased him. I give a nominal verdict of 'fair' – 2 points.

The total score: 1 + 1 + 0 + 0 + 2 = 4 points, giving an average of **0.8** for the five components. This is lower than 'mediocre to bad'.

Hence the result of the game – an ignominious defeat.

Yet conducting this analysis is only one half of the matter. On the basis of the work we have done, we need to make some practical recommendations. If I were the coach of the player who had Black, I would give him the following advice for his remaining tournament games:

- Try to attain the maximum objectivity in evaluating the position on the board.
- Only on that condition is it possible to control the course of events in the game and consequently reduce the likelihood of oversights.
- It is also essential to enhance the role of 'prophylactic thinking' in the course of the chess struggle. Then you will take many more correct decisions.

Let us now assess White's play.

S: self-control

As I have said, White was never in time-trouble. Control over the course of events in the game was achieved overall. Score: **5½** points (you can always find imperfections in a game if you want to).

T: tactics

There were no tactical oversights in the game. Verdict: 6 points.

O: objective evaluation

Early in the game, I understood that White had practically no opening advantage. Subsequently too I was sufficiently accurate in assessing the nature of the changes that were taking place on the board. Verdict: 6 points.

P: prophylactic thinking

Verdict (based on the above annotations to the game): 6 points.

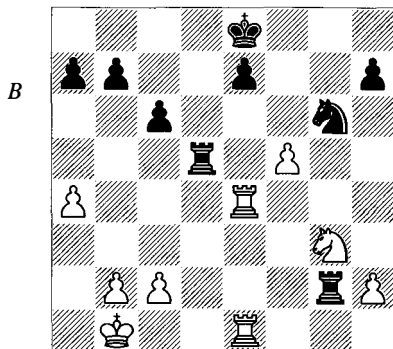
S: staying calm

It is here that I am not over-satisfied with myself. Calm did not set in until the final stage of the game, when I was already totally confident of its outcome. Verdict: adequate, 3 points.

Total score: 5½ + 6 + 6 + 6 + 3 = **26½** points. Overall assessment: 26½ ÷ 5 = **5.3** points; very good, almost 'excellent'.

According to the 'STOPS' system, the result of the game was highly convincing – *White deserved to win!*

Now let us examine another piece of play.



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In this tournament, up until the present game, I had not been doing badly. With 5 points out of 6, I was sharing first and second places. I was content with both the quality of my play and my competitive results. You can therefore understand my satisfaction when the diagram position arose after the move 26 f5. White has a large positional plus, which will inevitably be converted into a material one. Realizing this, Black played:

26...♖xg3!?

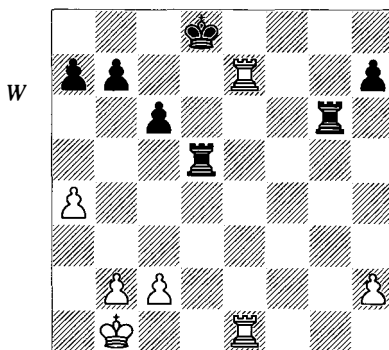
I now immersed myself in thought, seeing that I had plenty of time on the clock. White has the pleasant choice between 27 hxg3 ♖xf5, giving him an endgame with the exchange for a pawn, and 27 fxg6, when he will be a pawn up in a rook ending. In either case he has quite a few technical difficulties to overcome, but the position is most likely a win.

I shall not undertake to prove which decision is better; the choice depends rather on a player's taste. I opted for the rook ending.

27 fxg6 ♖xg6 28 ♖xe7+ ♖d8 (D)

Again White is faced with a choice. Which pawn (b7 or h7) should he take? In either case Black can be expected to offer an exchange of rooks with 29...♖d7.

I consider this to be the critical moment and, at least psychologically, a turning point of the game. The reason is not that White played a



weak move, but that I rejected the move that I felt instinctively was right.

First of all the variation 29 ♖xh7 ♖d7 30 ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 31 h4! ♖g4 32 ♖h1 ♖xa4 33 h5 ♖g4 34 h6 ♖g8 35 h7 ♖h8 attracted my attention, as the outside passed pawn is a potent force. I assessed 36 ♖c1(?) ♖e6 37 ♖d2 ♖f6 38 ♖d3 ♖g7 39 ♖c4 b6 40 c3 as offering White good winning chances (incorrectly, in fact, since 40...♖xh7! draws, as your computer will confirm to you). Despite my positive assessment of the line, *I lost confidence in myself and chose to play safe* by capturing the other pawn. In fact, capturing the h-pawn is strong, as White can play instead 36 ♖a2!, saving a tempo; e.g., 36...♖e6 (36...♖e7 37 ♖b3 ♖f6 38 ♖c4 b6 39 b4 ♖g7 40 b5 is winning for White) 37 ♖b3 ♖e5 (or 37...♖d5 38 ♖h6 b6 39 c4+) 38 ♖b4 and White should win.

29 ♖xb7

After this less forcing move, the position should still be won for White, but in my mind the 'worm of doubt' had been born, and my control of events in the game was lost.

29...♖d7 30 ♖xd7+

30 ♖b4 is a good four-rook ending for White.

30...♖xd7 31 ♖f1?

After this lazy move, the ending becomes problematic. After 31 ♖e5! ♖h6 (the a-pawn cannot be saved as 31...♖c7 32 ♖e7+ is hopeless for Black) 32 ♖a5 ♖c7 33 ♖xa7+ ♖b6 34 ♖e7 ♖a5 (34...♖xh2 35 b4) 35 b3 ♖xh2 36 ♖e6, White should win.

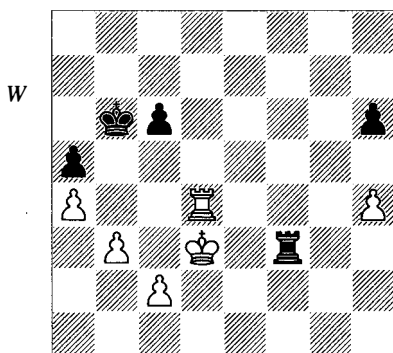
31...♖e6 32 b3 ♖h6 33 ♖f8 a5

The variation 33...♖xh2? 34 ♖a8 h5 35 ♖xa7, with ♖h7 to follow, would not of course suit Black.

34 ♖a8 ♖h5 35 ♖a7 ♖d6 36 ♖b2 h6 37 h3 ♖e6 38 h4 ♖d6 39 ♖f7

Or 39 ♖c3 ♙d5 40 ♖c4 ♗e6.

39...♗c5 40 ♙f4 ♙e5 41 ♖c3 ♙d5 42 ♙c4+ ♗b6 43 ♙d4 ♙f5 44 ♖d3 ♙f3+ (D)



Now some inexplicable happenings begin. Worn out by the constant problem of choices, I permitted myself to relax. This instantly led to *loss of control over the situation on the board*, the substitution of visual estimation for the precise calculation of variations, and, as a result, some gross oversights.

The logical continuation would now be 45 ♖c4 ♙f2 46 c3 h5 47 b4 ♙f3, when Black appears able to hold the draw with precise defence, but it would be easy for him to go wrong over the board. But to everyone's surprise (including my own), I played:

45 ♗e4?!

In astonishment, Panchenko replied:

45...♙c3

This move deprives White of any winning chances whatsoever. Yet he has dozens of safe ways to draw (the simplest is 46 ♖f5 ♙xc2 47 ♖g6). At this moment it was essential for me to readjust and regain *control* of the situation on the board. For this I needed to make an accurate *evaluation* of the new state of affairs, calculate some variations (*tactics*), but this time in a more disciplined way – and take the optimum decision in the circumstances. But to begin with, I repeat, it was necessary to recover my *self-control*, which required an effort of will-power.

I did not succeed in doing this. There followed:

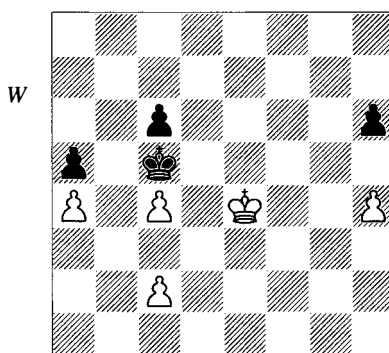
46 ♙c4?

This already is a *tactical* oversight. I had worked out the variation 46...♙xc4+ 47 bxc4 ♖c5 48 ♖f5 ♖xc4 49 ♖g6 ♖b4 50 ♖xh6

♖xa4 51 h5 ♖b4 52 ♖g6 a4 53 h6 a3 54 h7 a2 55 h8♙, when White queens first and simultaneously covers the black pawn's queening square. But I was forgetting the advice that is given to chess-players of practically every standard: *the consequences of going into a king-and-pawn ending must be calculated with extreme precision.*

The game proceeded as follows:

46...♙xc4+ 47 bxc4 ♖c5 (D)



By now I had seen the mistake in the foregoing variation. After 48 ♖f5?!, Black is naturally not going to waste time on the superfluous move 48...♖xc4?? (when after 49 ♖g6, the best he can do is to scrape a draw by 49...♖c3 50 ♖xh6 ♖xc2 51 h5 c5 52 ♖g6 c4 53 h6 c3 54 h7 ♖b1 55 h8♙ c2, as White can achieve no more than a drawn ♙+a♙ vs ♙ ending). Instead after 48 ♖f5?? ♖b4! 49 ♖g6 ♖xa4 50 ♖xh6 ♖b4 51 ♖g6 a4 52 h5 a3 it is Black who promotes first. The queen endgame after 53 c3+ ♖xc4 54 h6 a2 55 h7 a1♙ 56 h8♙ ♙xc3 is winning for Black, albeit not without some difficulty.

In view of this, White played:

48 ♖d3??

The hallucinations continue. It still wasn't too late (though this *was* the last chance) to pause, recover my *self-control*, and calculate a variation that is not too involved and leads eventually to a draw: 48 h5! ♖b4 (not 48...♖xc4?! 49 ♖f5, when 49...♖c3! 50 ♖g6 leads to the same draw as we saw above) 49 ♖d4 ♖xa4 50 ♖c5 ♖a3 51 ♖xc6 ♖b4 52 c5 a4 53 ♖b6 a3 54 c6 a2 55 c7 a1♙ 56 c8♙, etc.

I am showing the end of the game with some reluctance:

48...♖b4 49 ♖d4 h5!

'Elementary, my dear Watson!'

50 ♖e5 ♗xa4 51 ♖d6 ♗b4 52 c5 a4 53 ♗xc6 a3 54 ♖d6 a2 55 c6 a1 ♔56 c7 ♗d4+ 0-1

In the remaining two rounds of the tournament I picked up a mere half-point (even that was due to luck!), and as a result there was no question at all of a place in the prize list. A painful but deserved defeat.

There are no undeserved defeats. There are undeserved victories.

You will agree that Black’s win doesn’t look convincing. I must, of course, give my opponent his due – he showed tenacity and stubbornness in defending a very difficult position, he set me problems and eventually made me go wrong. But you cannot deny that Black had a large amount of luck. Whether White’s defeat was fortuitous remains to be investigated. For this purpose, we will have recourse to the ‘STOPS’ system (applied to the losing side).

S: self-control

In the final part of the game this went completely astray, as you saw for yourselves. After the game, trying to make sense of what had happened, I told myself that my mind at that time had been *running amok*; it was a condition close to madness (*chess* madness, of course). My head thought what it wanted to think, and my hands did as they pleased, behaving at the same time as though they had never known each other. The verdict is a categorical 0 points – very bad.

T: tactics

How would you rate White’s calculation of variations in this game? I give it 0 points – very bad.

O: objective evaluation

How can there be any question of objectivity, when there was no evaluation of the position at

all? The train simply went off the rails; 0 points, perhaps it should be even less, but ‘STOPS’ doesn’t allow for that.

P: prophylactic thinking

Here I have fewer complaints against myself; overall, I understood much of what went on in the game. The only trouble was that my hands didn’t obey my head. Verdict: fair, 2 points.

S: staying calm

In this game, after I achieved what was close to a won position (you will remember what the situation in the tournament was), I would describe my condition not as *calm* but as one where I had ‘switched myself off’. I was no longer able to ‘switch on’ at the decisive moments of the struggle. Verdict: 0 points, very bad.

The conclusion is easily drawn: as I played *very badly* in this game, what result other than a loss did I deserve?

Now some concluding words about the ‘STOPS’ system. What do we gain from knowing this system (granted that knowledge and ability – as our last example made clear – are separate concepts)?

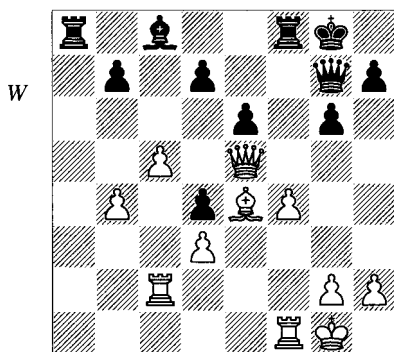
1) Before a game (even without the help of their coach), players can test their inward readiness for the struggle ahead.

2) Even during play, they can perform a test on themselves and possibly introduce corrections as the game goes on.

It would give me pleasure, dear readers, if the ‘STOPS’ system were to be absorbed and understood, and if the advice I have offered proved useful to you.

Answer to Exercise for Chapter 2

Exercise 26



Let us try looking at the position through Black's eyes (*prophylactic thinking*). Yes, his situation is hopeless. Not only is he losing the d4-pawn, but for good measure his c8-bishop is pitifully undeveloped. This means he can save himself only with help from his opponent. To that end he has to make him commit an error – and in the present situation, a trap is the only way. The trap may not even save the game if it works, but it may complicate the position as a start – then the possibility of subsequent errors increases, and hence Black's saving chances improve.

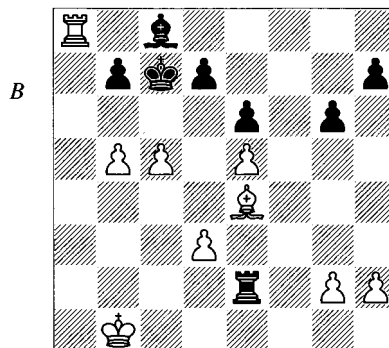
I think it was by reasoning on these lines that I managed to anticipate the trap (or rather a pseudo-trap!). In the event of 27 ♖xg7+ ♔xg7 28 ♜c4 ♜a2 29 ♜xd4, Black possibly intended to fish in troubled waters with 29...♜xf4?! 30 ♜xf4

e5. However, even this is inadequate, as White has the decisive reply 31 ♕xb7!, overloading the black bishop and winning at least a piece. Therefore he would need to try something like 29...b6, intending 30 cxb6 d5, when he has at least freed his bishop. So the answer to the exercise is that both moves are good, but if you intended 27 ♖xg7+, you needed to have anticipated Black's idea; moreover, the move chosen keeps a tighter grip on the game, and so is preferable.

27 ♜c4 ♖xe5

A painful decision for Black to take, but it's hard to suggest any other reasonable move. He must make do with what he has.

28 fxe5 ♜xf1+ 29 ♔xf1 ♜a2 30 ♜xd4 ♜b2 31 ♔e1 ♔f8 32 ♔d1 ♔e7 33 ♔c1 ♜a2 34 ♔b1 ♜e2 35 b5 ♔d8 36 ♜a4 ♔c7 37 ♜a8 (D)



1-0

Black's decision to resign is fully understandable. Throughout his 36(!) moves in the game, Black not only made no move at all with his light-squared bishop, but it was not even physically possible for him to do so!

(Now return to page 46.)

3 The Advantage of the Bishop-Pair

One bishop is half a bishop; two bishops are three bishops.

It has been known for a long time now that apart from the value of individual pieces there is such a thing as the value of their interaction. Thus it is with the two bishops – their strength lies in the fact that their actions complement rather than duplicate each other.

It was the first World Champion, Wilhelm Steinitz, who first spoke about the advantage of the bishop-pair. The essence of his method for exploiting this advantage consists in a particular arrangement of the pawns, constricting the knight and depriving it of outposts. If the fight is being conducted against a knight and bishop, the latter is constricted simultaneously. The advance of the pawns, according to Steinitz, does not lead to weaknesses in your own camp, since the two bishops cover squares of both colours. In this way the conditions are gradually created for decisive operations.

On the other hand, in his book *Chess Middlegames: Strategy*, the well-known Soviet theorist Peter Romanovsky maintained: “For the evaluation of a position, one player’s possession of two bishops does not count as a specific form of advantage... An increase in the activity of the bishops is grounded in a complex of weak squares or other weaknesses in the position – it depends on the features of the specific situation as a whole.”

Who is right, then? Steinitz or Romanovsky?

It seems to me that Igor Bondarevsky came nearest to the truth in his book *Attacking the King*, when he stated: “Two bishops are stronger than a different combination of minor pieces in the majority of positions that arise in practice. With that proviso, which almost goes without saying, we may speak of the advantage of the bishop-pair.”

Still, where exactly is that golden mean between the two opinions?

I shall try to answer this and many other questions in the present chapter.

Bishop or Knight?

Which of them is stronger? In chess this is one of the ‘philosophical’ questions that define the level of a player’s strategic understanding.

From days of old it has been customary to divide chess-players into two groups: the ‘Morphytes’ (adherents of the style of Paul Morphy, who preferred playing with bishops) and the ‘Chigorinists’ (Mikhail Chigorin was reputed to be very fond of knights, but this may be based on some of his opening choices that led to specific ‘knights vs bishops’ scenarios rather than a general preference on his part). In modern chess it has long been no secret that these pieces, ‘arithmetically’ of equal worth, may prove stronger or weaker depending on the situation on the board. For a better grasp of this issue, let us investigate its strategic basis. Have you given attention to the way the value of the pieces, their worth in relation to each other, undergoes transformation?

Anyone beginning chess soon learns that the strength of a bishop or knight is approximately equal to three pawns, while a rook equals five pawns and a queen nine, and the king is invaluable (whatever the cost, we must protect our ‘gracious monarch’ from being checkmated).

To an experienced player, this ‘school arithmetic’ is no longer suitable and in the endgame it changes outright. Why is this?

King: If in the opening and middlegame the king is more timid than a hare (though let us not forget Steinitz’s view that ‘the king should defend itself!’), in the endgame his majesty becomes a powerful fighting unit with a value of roughly four pawns. (Imagine – stronger than a minor piece and only slightly surpassed by a rook!) Of course, it is impossible to be ‘a king

up' in literal terms, but this can be seen as the difference in value between a highly active king and one that completely lacks mobility.

Pawn: Of course, in the middlegame the footsoldier is already dreaming of becoming a general. Only who will permit this, with such an abundance of officers on the board? In the endgame, the pawn is often the very hero who brings the drama to its dénouement.

Rook: In the opening and often in the middlegame too, when there are few open lines and many 'barking dogs', the rook feels like a bear surrounded in its den. In the endgame, however, it is set free and can run wild. Conventionally, a rook in the ending is said to possess one-and-a-half times its earlier strength.

Queen: Theoretically the queen too is afraid of attacks by the opponent's pieces and pawns, but in comparison with the rook it is much more mobile. In the ending the queen also increases in strength, if only slightly, thanks to the greater number of open lines.

Bishop: A long-range piece, but if there are many pawn-barriers on the board, its power is often limited. In the ending, however, when the quantity of pawn-obstacles diminishes, this piece too gains in strength.

Knight: In this case, the question is more complicated. Bishop or knight? These pieces remind me of characters from Alexandre Dumas. The bishop is Portos – strong but direct and plain. The knight is Aramis – less powerful but wily and unpredictable. The knight's cunning is particularly dangerous in the middlegame, when less attention is paid to it.

In the middlegame, the knight is not bothered by bastions formed by pieces and pawns, while its combinative thrusts can prove lethal.

In the endgame, the knight's deviousness gives rise to more caution, there are less of the piece-and-pawn-barriers that enhance its significance, and its slowness of movement becomes more and more noticeable.

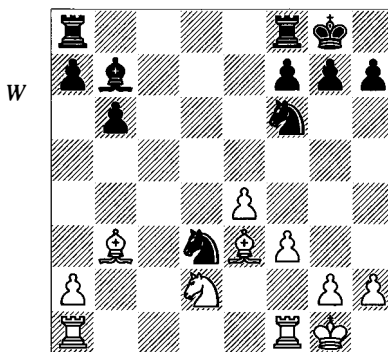
Thus in the endgame, while the other pieces receive a 'pay rise', the knight's value is appreciably hit by inflation. Accordingly the bishop's superiority over the knight in the final stage of the game was designated, most aptly and not without cause, as the 'minor exchange' by Capablanca.

Let us draw the conclusion from everything said above.

The knight is a combinative piece and therefore seeks middlegame complexities, whereas the bishop prefers endgame simplicity. Hence exchanges and simplification, reducing the tactics and bringing the endgame closer, are favourable to the side possessing the bishop-pair.

In the contest of bishop against knight, the basic question 'Which is stronger?' largely determines the players' strategy.

Bishop Stronger than Knight



Kotov – Florian
Budapest 1949

There is no doubt about White's advantage – he has the bishop-pair and a spatial plus which makes for greater piece activity. But as we know from Steinitz, the initiative has to be increased or there is a danger that it will disappear.

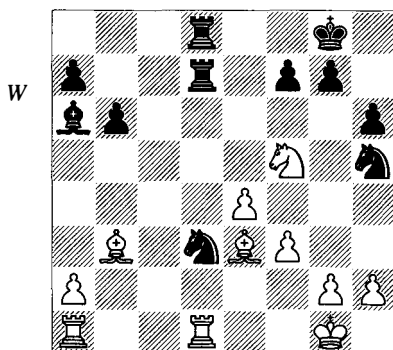
20 ♖c4 ♗a6?!

When defending, you should not be thinking of premature activity but primarily of erecting protective bulwarks. Black is clearly overrating his position and hence losing his sense of danger. A better move is 20...♞fd8. Admittedly, after 21 ♗g5 h6! 22 ♗xf6 gxf6 this would lead to the complete shattering of Black's pawn-front. The pawns would then be virtually incapable of any successful offensive operations, but in defence they could form a sturdy fortress.

21 ♖d6 ♞ad8

Not 21...♞c5? 22 ♞fc1.

22 ♞f5 ♞d7 23 ♗g5 ♖h5 24 ♞fd1 h6 25 ♗e3 ♞fd8 (D)



Exercise 27: In White's place, what would you play?

(For the answer, see page 90.)

(Please remember that the exercises and their solutions are an integral part of the chapter; a good deal of the core content of the chapter is included in them. So please think about each exercise and read its solution before continuing to the subsequent material.)

"The future belongs to the player who has the bishops." (Siegbert Tarrasch)

"What constitutes the bishop's advantage over the knight? It is the fact that the bishop can influence the conflict from a distance, whereas the knight is effective only from the nearest squares. What is the best way to utilize the bishop's superiority? By driving the knight as far away as possible and then continually preventing it from making its way back into the game. Pawns are most suited to this end...

"Of course, pawn advances by no means always result in a good position ... But if they lead to a weakening of the opponent's pawns, we may reckon the resulting position is easier to exploit with the bishop-pair than with the aid of knights." (Max Euwe, *Practical Chess Lessons*)

C. Bauer – Dorfman

France 1993

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 ♘c6 6 ♙e3 ♘g4 7 ♙b5 ♘xe3 8 fxe3 ♙d7 9 ♙xc6?

A serious positional error. The only rational continuation was 9 0-0 ♘e5 10 ♘f3.

9...bxc6 10 0-0 e5!

Without the exchange on c6, this move would be dubious in view of the weakness on d5.

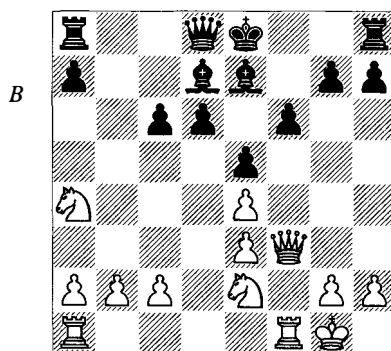
"Exchanging bishop for knight can be justified only after the pawn position has crystallized." (Iosif Dorfman).

11 ♙f3

Nor is 11 ♘f5 dangerous for Black; he continues 11...♙e6, with ...g6 to follow.

11...f6 12 ♘de2 ♙e7 13 ♘a4!? (D)

It isn't hard to guess that Black is aiming for ...d5, so White makes advance preparations to restrain him with c4.



13...♙a5 14 b3 ♙e6 15 ♘g3

Not 15 c4? ♙xc4.

15...g6 16 ♙ac1

Counting on meeting 16...0-0 with 17 c4.

16...d5 17 exd5 ♙xd5

For reasons we can now understand, Dorfman is trying to reach an ending. The combinative skirmishes initiated by 17...cxd5 18 c4 0-0 19 cxd5 ♙xd5 20 ♙g4 would not suit Black at all.

18 ♙e2 0-0 19 c4 ♙a5 20 ♙f3 ♙ac8

Caution! Black senses danger! After the straightforward 20...♙c7?! 21 ♘e4, followed by ♘ac5 (or ♘ec5), the white knights would begin to show increasing aggression.

21 ♙fd1 f5! 22 ♘e2 ♙a3!

Excellent strategic understanding of the essence of the position. White's knights, of course, are looking for a combinative clash. But by forcing off both pairs of rooks, Black considerably reduces the tactics and thereby brings the game closer to an ending in which the superiority of the bishops over the knights should be decisive.

23 ♙c2

In the event of 23 ♙b1 ♙xc4 24 bxc4 ♙xa4 25 ♙d7 ♙fd8, White's little display of activity would not at all compensate for the pawn lost.

23...♗fd8 24 ♖ec3 ♗xd1+ 25 ♜xd1 ♗d8 26 ♗d2 ♗xd2 27 ♜xd2 ♜f7 28 ♜f2 ♜e8 29 g3 ♗d8!

A type of strategic device which players half-jokingly call 'exchange speculation'. The point is that the stronger side, possessing a material plus or a solid positional advantage, offers the defender a patently unfavourable exchange, leaving him with an awkward choice: either to assent to this exchange which increases the active side's advantage, or to remove his piece to a less effective square, conceding a convenient foothold to his opponent.

30 ♜e2 h5!

It is now time for Black to launch a kingside pawn offensive aimed at seizing space and limiting the actions of the enemy knights.

31 ♖d1?!

When defending, of course, you have to be psychologically prepared to make concessions. But this should only be done when there is no other way out; you should still be endeavouring to obey the order not to give an inch. At this point 31 c5 was better, trying to keep the light-squared bishop out of the game, if only temporarily. Thus, on 31...♜a5?! 32 ♖b1 ♗xc5 33 ♜c2 ♗e7 34 ♜xc6+ ♜f7, White would obtain some chances of counterplay.

31...♗b4 32 ♖db2 e4 33 ♖d1 ♜d2

At long last the queen exchange is guaranteed, and the advantage of the two bishops (in this case the term 'advantage' should arouse no doubts) secures victory for Black. However, he had a more tactical solution at his disposal: 33...f4! rips open the white king's defences, enabling the black queen and bishops to move in swiftly for the kill; for example, 34 gxf4 ♗g4 or 34 exf4 ♜d4+ 35 ♖e3 ♗d2 intending ...♗g4.

34 ♜xd2 ♗xd2 35 ♜e2

Here the attempt to shut the dark-squared bishop out of play by 35 ♖ac3 ♜e7 36 ♜e2 ♗c1 37 ♖b1 g5 would make a most naïve impression.

35...♗b4 36 ♖f2 g5!

Paying attention to the opponent's designs (prophylactic thinking)! The simple 36...♜e7?! 37 ♖h3 would give White distinct chances of constructing a fortress.

37 ♖b2

Or 37 ♖h3 ♗e7.

37...♜e7 38 ♖bd1 ♜f6 39 ♖b2 ♜g6

Black's shortage of time explains all.

40 ♖a4 ♜f6 41 ♖b2 ♗d6 42 ♖bd1 h4 43 ♖h1

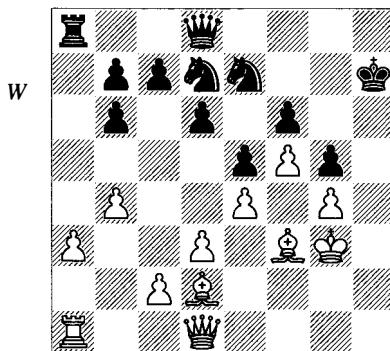
The knight on h1 looks ludicrous. But alas, the alternative is no better: 43 gxf4 g4.

43...♗f7 44 ♖df2 ♗h5+ 0-1

After 45 ♗d2 ♗f3 White's pieces are in a picturesque state of paralysis.

In this game, the chief role in the winning process was played by Black's pawn superiority in the centre and on the kingside.

As we observed earlier, an advantage in space is of no small significance in chess. Even in closed positions, where it might seem that the bishops are up against pawn-barriers while the knights can easily jump over them, a spatial plus is immensely important.



Chigorin – Falk

Simultaneous, Moscow 1899

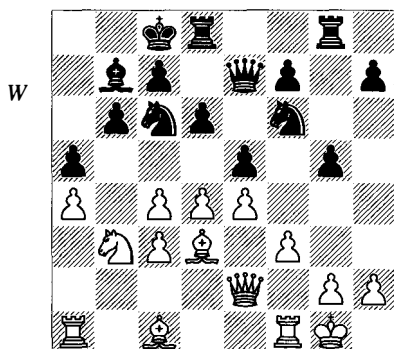
Exercise 28:

1) Identify the main strategic factors in this position.

2) Suggest a plan for White.

(For the answer, see page 90.)

Let us return to the question of the confrontation between bishop and knight. "Given that diagonals are the 'work area' of the bishops, a conclusion automatically suggests itself: in order to activate the bishops and widen their sphere of influence, diagonals have to be freed from encumbering material. This method of proceeding, which often involves material sacrifices, is called 'diagonal clearance'." (Alexander Kochiev).



Gligorić – Larsen
Manila 1973

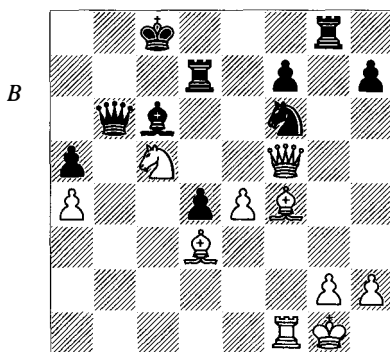
15 c5!

A move directed not only at giving the bishop on d3 greater influence ('diagonal clearance'), but also at weakening Black's castled position.

15...exd4 16 cxb6 dxc3 17 ♖e3 g4 18 bxc7 ♜xc7?!

Now it is one-way traffic. After 18...♜de8, Black at least retains some hope of counterplay.

19 ♜ac1 d5 20 ♜xc3 gxf3 21 ♜xf3 d4 22 ♜f5+ ♜d7 23 ♜f4 ♜b6 24 ♜xc6+ ♜xc6 25 ♜c5 (D)



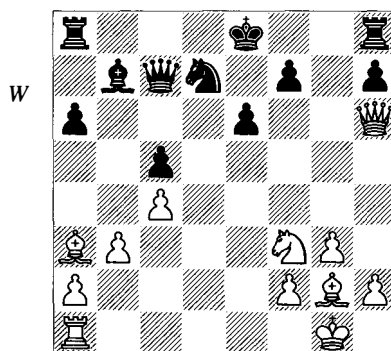
White's bishops, especially the dark-squared one, are occupying dominant positions, and this guarantees a quick victory.

25...♜g4 26 ♜b1 ♜a7 27 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 28 ♜c5+! 1-0

"Apart from 'diagonal clearance', another strategic device for enhancing the bishops' activity is an 'unbalanced exchange'. It amounts to a voluntary worsening of the balance of material forces. The aim of this kind of exchange is to alter the position in a manner that optimizes

the conditions for realizing the potential of the remaining pieces – in our case, the bishops.

"An unbalanced exchange is closely related to a positional sacrifice, and in many cases the two concepts coincide. The basic difference between them emerges when such an exchange, from the opponent's viewpoint, is not forced." (Kochiev)



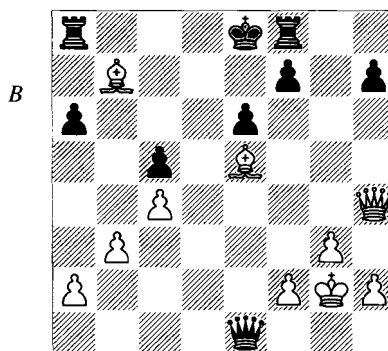
Donchenko – Korsunsky
Baku 1976

Black has a slight material plus – the exchange for a pawn. But his king position is insecure. If you add to this Black's weakened dark squares when his opponent has a dark-squared bishop, then White's position looks the more promising.

20 ♜b2 ♜f8 21 ♜h4 ♜d6 22 ♜e1 ♜d3 23 ♜e5 ♜d2

After 23...♜xe5 24 ♜xb7 ♜f3+ 25 ♜xf3 ♜xf3 26 ♜a3, White has some advantage.

24 ♜xb7! ♜xe1+ 25 ♜g2 ♜xe5 26 ♜xe5 (D)



The bishop is immune (26...♜xe5 27 ♜c6#), while the threats persist. The only possibility of

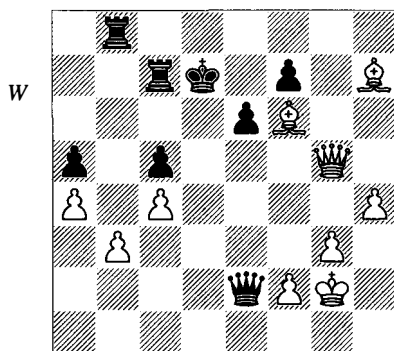
resistance is for the king to plunge into the thick of it.

26...♔d7 27 ♖f6!

An interesting position has come about: two bishops are dominating two rooks!

27...♖ab8 28 ♖e4 a5 29 ♖xh7 ♖e2 30 ♖g5 ♖bc8 31 a4 ♖c7 32 h4 ♖b8? (D)

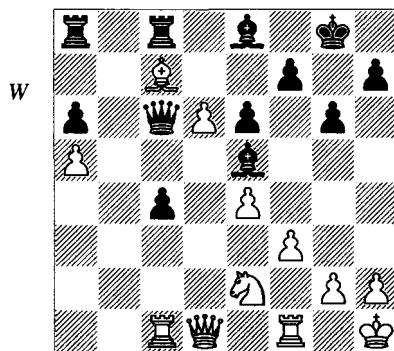
Now Black's pieces lose their coordination entirely. The right way to seek b-file counterplay is 32...♖fc8, intending ...♖b7, when the battle continues.



33 ♖e5 ♖xb3 34 ♖f4!

We can safely assume that Korsunsky overlooked this move, after which the fight is over. Defending everything is impossible.

34...♖h5 35 ♖xc7 ♖xh7 36 ♖d6+ ♔c8 37 ♖c6 1-0

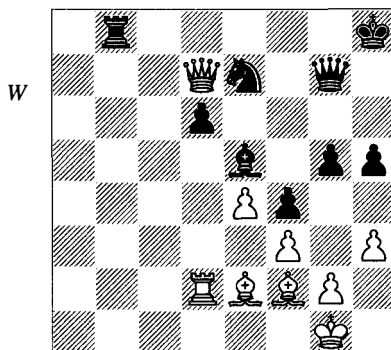


Browne – Mecking

Interzonal tournament, Manila 1976

Exercise 29:

- 1) Give your assessment of the position.
- 2) In Black's place, what would you play? (For the answer, see page 91.)



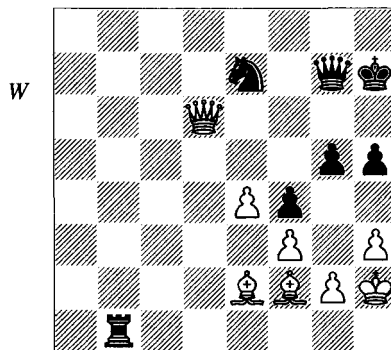
Alekhine – E. Spencer

Simultaneous, Liverpool 1923

36 ♖xd6!

“Seizing the key to the position and thereby acquiring a decisive plus.” (Alekhine).

36...♖xd6 37 ♖xd6 ♖b1+ 38 ♖h2 ♖h7 (D)



By the definition that we laid down earlier, White's exchange sacrifice is a sacrifice only in a nominal, formal sense. Furthermore, the growing power of the bishops is becoming irresistible.

39 ♖d3?

This allows Black to put up considerable resistance by 39...♖d1!, as the counterplay based on ...g4 remains potent in some critical lines. Instead, the more direct 39 ♖d4! is overwhelming.

39...♖b7? 40 ♖d4 ♖f7 41 e5+ ♖g6 42 e6! ♖e7 43 ♖e5! ♖h6 44 ♖xg6 ♖xg6 45 ♖e4+ ♖h6 46 ♖f5 ♖e8 47 h4 ♖g8 48 e7 ♖b8 49 ♖e5! 1-0

Of course, you would have to be extremely dogmatic and lacking in objectivity to maintain that the bishop is always stronger than the knight

(especially in the middlegame). The truth is like a pendulum located somewhere midway between the outermost points of its swing.

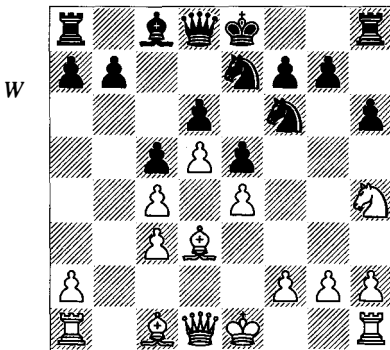
Knight Stronger than Bishop

The most obvious case where the knight surpasses the bishop in strength is a middlegame of the closed type, with the bishops hemmed in by the pawn-chains.

Spassky – Fischer

World Ch match (game 5), Reykjavik 1972

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♙b4 4 e3 c5 5 ♙d3 ♘c6 6 ♘f3 ♙xc3+ 7 bxc3 d6 8 e4 e5 9 d5 ♘e7 10 ♘h4 h6 (D)



11 f4?!

The first in a series of impulsive decisions. 11 f3 or 11 g3 is better.

11...♘g6!

Of course, there is no need at all to fall in with White's wishes by accepting the piece sacrifice: 11...exf4?! 12 ♙xf4 g5? 13 e5! and White wins.

12 ♘xg6 fxg6 13 fxe5?!

It is better to maintain the pawn-tension in the centre (in the hope that the game would later open up for the benefit of the bishops) by playing 13 0-0 0-0 14 h3.

13...dxe5 14 ♙e3 b6 15 0-0 0-0 16 a4?

From the point of view of strategic understanding (or rather lack of it), this is an astonishing mistake by a reigning World Champion.

16...a5!

After this (as the further course of the struggle will show), the weakness of the black pawn

on b6 is much less significant than that of the white one on a4.

17 ♚b1?!

With each move, White increasingly loses the thread of the game. (Incidentally, after going through it to the end, I advise the reader to analyse this game according to the 'STOPS' system.) It is better to be thinking already about constructing a defence with 17 ♙e2 followed by 18 ♙f3.

17...♙d7 18 ♚b2 ♚b8 19 ♚bf2 ♙e7 20 ♙c2 g5 21 ♙d2 ♙e8! 22 ♙e1 ♙g6 23 ♙d3 ♘h5 24 ♙xf8+ ♙xf8 25 ♙xf8+ ♙xf8 26 ♙d1?

Total disorientation. It is essential to opt for 26 g3.

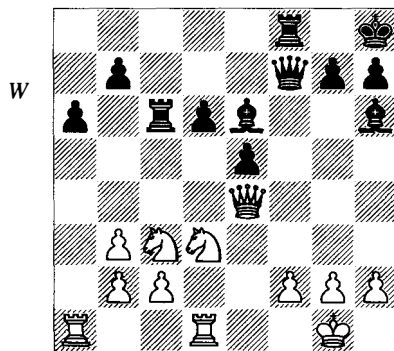
26...♘f4 27 ♙c2?

Now for the knockout! The correct move is 27 ♙b1, although even then, after 27...♙e7 followed by ...♘d8 and ...♙c7, Black's increasing advantage leaves no room for doubt about the outcome of the game.

27...♙xa4! 0-1

28 ♙xa4 is met by the decisive 28...♙xe4.

Knights are particularly dangerous in the middlegame if they can use weak squares in the centre as outposts from which they cannot be expelled.



Anand – Gelfand
Dos Hermanas 1996

The verdict on the position is unambiguous: there can be no question of any advantage of the bishop-pair, since by seizing the outposts on d5 and e4, White's knights should secure him a considerable, possibly decisive, plus.

26 ♙e2! ♙g6 27 f3 ♙f5 28 ♘b4 ♚c7 29 ♘bd5 ♚f7 30 ♘e4

The aim is achieved: the commanding heights are conquered.

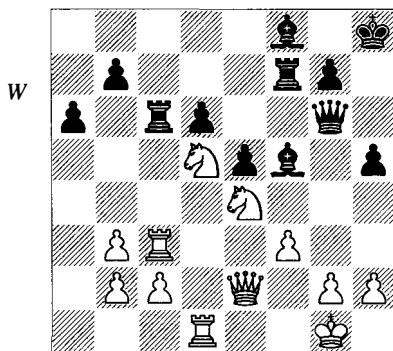
30...♙g5

I am so glad I wasn't playing this position for Black! As I see it, that would be worse than walking blindfold across a minefield. At the present moment Black has little in the way of choice. Either he continues as in the game, condemning himself to passive defence without chances of counterplay, or he chooses a forcing line leading to an endgame, of which the result is also a foregone conclusion: 30...♙xe4 31 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 32 fxe4 and now 32...♞f2 33 ♞f1 ♞xf1+ 34 ♞xf1 ♞xf1+ 35 ♙xf1 ♙c1 36 ♙b6 ♙xb2 37 ♙c4 ♙d4 38 ♙xd6 b6 39 ♙e2 ♙g8 40 ♙d3 ♙f8 41 ♙c4 ♙e7 42 ♙d5. The attempt to strengthen Black's play with 32...♙g8 is hardly successful; White can simply continue with 33 b4 (parrying the idea of ...♙c1 after an exchange of all the rooks – which appeared in the line we just looked at – in view of the reply b3). It is of course possible to seek other defensive ideas for Black, but it is akin to trying to knock a hole in a wall with your forehead, especially under playing conditions of limited time and energy!

There followed:

31 ♙dc3 ♙e7 32 ♞d3 ♞c8 33 ♞ad1 ♞c6 34 ♙d5 ♙f8 35 ♞c3 h5? (D)

A frequently-occurring mistake that is familiar to us. Black needs to make some *luft* of course, but he had to do it more modestly (35...h6), so as not to give his opponent any more holds on which to fasten. But Black would dearly love to do something even slightly active!



36 ♙h1 h4?! 37 h3 ♙g8 38 ♞c4! ♖h5 39 ♙e3 d5?!

It is extremely dangerous for the defender to plunge unprepared into tactics, especially when in time-trouble.

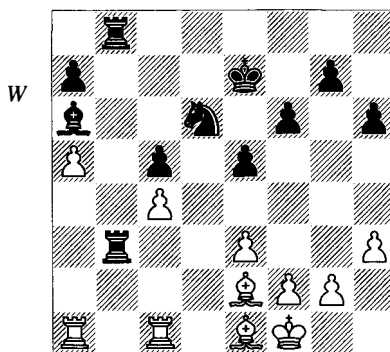
40 ♙xd5 ♙xh3

Or 40...♞xc4 41 bxc4 ♙xh3 42 gxh3 ♞xf3 43 ♙ef6+.

41 gxh3 ♞xf3 42 ♙ef6+! 1-0

Black resigned in view of 42...♞xf6 43 ♙xf6+ gxf6 44 ♞g4+, or 42...gxf6 43 ♞g4+.

Bishops are very active if they have open diagonals. Therefore one of the fundamental methods of fighting against the two bishops is to limit their mobility by erecting pawn-barriers.



Salov – Kamsky

*Candidates match (game 6),
Sanghi Nagar 1995*

Despite his possession of the bishop-pair, White's position is dismal – both bishops are restricted in their actions. In addition, Black controls the strategically important b-file.

30 ♙g1

Alas, it is hard to recommend an active plan. White therefore has to conduct a static, barren defence.

30...♞b2 31 ♙d3 ♙e6 32 h4 g5 33 hxg5 hxg5 34 ♙f1 g4 35 ♙c3 ♞b3 36 ♙e2 f5 37 ♙e1 ♞b2 38 ♙d3 ♞b3 39 ♙e2 ♞b2

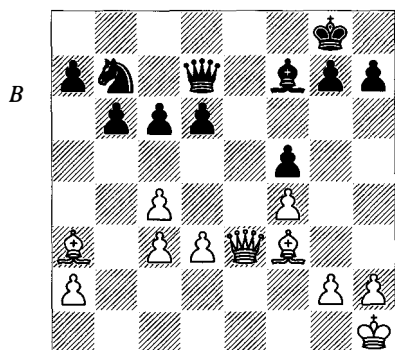
This type of repetition is a stock device to gain thinking time.

40 ♙d3 ♞h8

Concrete threats are now starting to emerge, such as 41...♞b7, followed by ...♞bh7.

41 ♞cb1 ♞bb8 42 ♞xb8?! ♞xb8 43 ♞c1 ♞b3 44 ♙c2 ♞a3 45 e4 fxe4 46 ♙d1 ♙f5 47 ♙e2 ♞a2 48 ♙f1 ♞a4

and White soon resigned.

**Suba – Smyslov***Interzonal tournament, Las Palmas 1982*

Here, as in the last example, White has no cause to speak of an ‘advantage’ of the bishop-pair. His dark-squared bishop is extremely passive, and prospects for activating it are not to be discerned. One other feature of the position is also important, namely the pawn weaknesses against which the knight is a very dangerous attacker, since, thanks to its merits that we have mentioned already, it can switch between attacking weak points on both light and dark squares.

28...♖d8 29 ♙d1 c5 30 ♙c1 ♗f8 31 ♜e2?! ♜c6 32 ♜c2?! d5!

White’s planless, unreasoning play has allowed Black to start active operations.

33 ♙f3 ♜d7 34 cxd5 ♙xd5 35 ♙e2?!

Aiming to preserve the ‘advantage of the bishop-pair’, White removes his bishop from attack, but in so doing he allows his opponent a dramatic increase in activity (you will recall the notion of ‘exchange speculation’).

38...♖e6 36 ♙e3 ♗e7 37 ♜d2 ♜c6 38 ♙f1 c4! 39 d4?

The lesser evil was probably 39 dxc4 ♙xc4, although in that case, after the exchange of light-squared bishops (which White of course had avoided only a few moves ago), Black’s advantage would be substantial, indeed close to decisive.

Incidentally, haven’t you ever pondered the question of why the piece configuration ‘queen and knight vs queen and bishop’ is considered more promising for the side with the knight, whereas ‘rook and knight vs rook and bishop’ is thought to favour the bishop? To establish this opinion by means of variations is plainly

impossible. But let us try to do it by logic, relying on the concepts we already possess.

We decided that the knight in chess was a cunning piece, suited to combinations. Therefore an alliance between the queen’s strength and the knight’s cunning is more dangerous in the middlegame (and we *are* essentially in a middlegame as long as queens and at least some other pieces are on the board) than a union between the queen and a bishop, which, even if a strong piece, is an excessively simple one. On the other hand, the pairing of a rook with a knight or bishop, in the absence of other pieces, constitutes an endgame situation – which the knight fears ‘as the devil fears incense’.

But let us return to the game. There followed:

39...a5 40 ♜b2 ♖c7 41 ♙c1 ♖b5 42 ♜c2 ♗f6 43 ♗g1 ♙e4 44 ♜f2 ♗f7

44...♖xc3?! 45 d5! allows White a lot more freedom, although objectively the advantage stays with Black.

45 ♙d2 ♖d6 46 ♜h4 h6 47 ♜h5+ ♗g8 48 ♜g6 ♙d5!

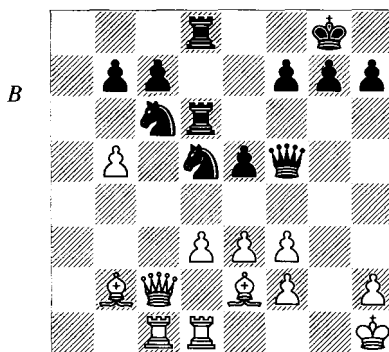
Not only freeing the e4-square for the knight or queen, but also preparing to give the black king a safe shelter on h7.

49 ♙e1 ♙f7 50 ♜g3 ♜e4 51 ♜h4 ♗h7 52 ♙f2 ♙d5 53 ♜d8 ♖b5 54 ♜xb6 ♖xc3 55 ♜xa5 ♖e2+ 56 ♙xe2

A time-trouble blunder, but 56 ♗h1 c3 is also hopeless for White.

56...♜xg2# (0-1)

And finally, knights are especially dangerous in a middlegame with combinative complexities.

**Van Wely – Piket***Wijk aan Zee 1996*

Exercise 30:

- 1) Give your assessment of the position.
- 2) Evaluate the sacrifice 25...♔d4.
(For the answer, see page 91.)

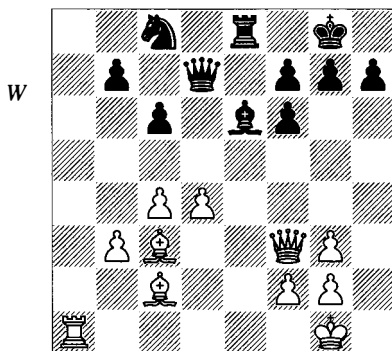
Two Bishops in the Middlegame

Now that we understand the mutual relations of bishop and knight, it will be easier to ascertain the conditions under which the bishop-pair in the middlegame can become an advantage.

The basis for answering this question is the need to prove a bishop's superiority over a knight. The rule which follows from this is very simple but incredibly important for an elucidation of the strategy:

In order to demonstrate the advantage of the bishop-pair, it is necessary above all to demonstrate the power of the bishop that has no opposite number on the same colour of squares.

Let us examine this in a series of concrete examples.

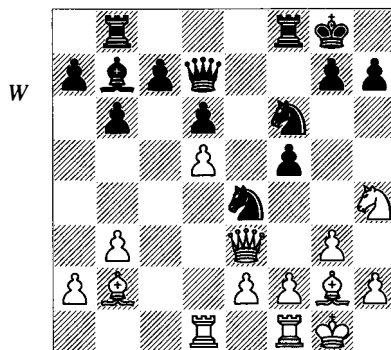


Short – Zilber
Hastings 1979/80

Exercise 31: Suggest a plan of action for White.

(For the answer, see page 92.)

Short was of course not the first to discover the strategic precept that he employed in the exercise that you have just tackled. It had already been seen repeatedly in one form or another.



Alekhine – Alexander
Nottingham 1936

16 ♖h3!

After this neither 16...♔xd5 17 ♖xe4 nor 16...♙xd5 17 ♙xd5 ♔xd5 18 ♖xe4 would be at all to Black's liking.

16...g6 17 f3 ♔c5 18 ♖g5 ♖g7

Not 18...♔xd5? 19 ♔xg6!.

19 b4 ♔cd7

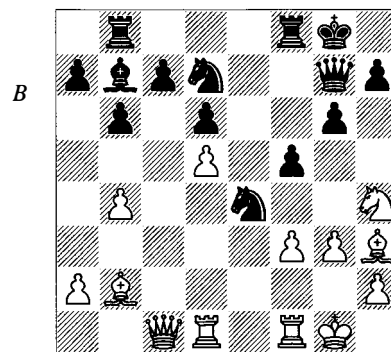
After 19...♔a4 20 ♙al the black knight would be shut out of play for the long term.

20 e4!

The attacking force of White's dark-squared bishop starts to reveal itself. On 20...fxe4 White has 21 ♙xd7.

20...♔xe4 21 ♖cl! (D)

Declining to exchange pieces 'for something and nothing': 21 ♙xg7 ♔xg5 22 ♙xf8 ♔xh3+ 23 ♙g2 ♙xf8 24 ♙xh3 ♔f6.



21...♔ef6 22 ♙xf5! ♙h8

Or 22...gxf5 23 ♔xf5 ♖h8 24 ♔h6+ ♙g7 25 ♖g5#.

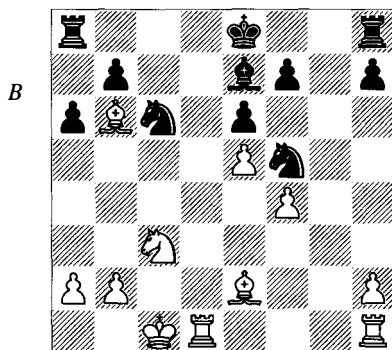
23 ♙e6 ♙a6

The situation is hopeless because Black has nothing with which to oppose the power of the

b2-bishop. White answers 23...♖be8 with 24 g4, and 23...♜e5 with 24 f4.

24 ♖fe1 ♜e5 25 f4 ♜d3 26 ♖xd3! ♜xd3 27 g4 1-0

There is no satisfactory defence against the g5 advance.



Svidler – Anand

Russia-World rapidplay match, Moscow 2002

Black might seem to have everything in order: he has a splendid knight outpost on f5 and the possibility of seizing one of the open files.

And yet we can tell that Black's position is incredibly difficult because he will presently be helpless to oppose the might of White's light-squared bishop.

18...♜d8 19 ♜f2 ♜h4 20 ♜g1!

Exchanging the dark-squared bishops before the most appropriate moment is not in White's interest, since his dark-squared bishop beautifully complements the strength of the light-squared one. ('One bishop is half a bishop; two bishops are three bishops.')

20...♞g8 21 ♜f3 ♞c8

21...♞d8 is better.

22 ♖b1 ♜a5 23 ♜e4 ♜c4 24 b3 ♜a3+ 25 ♖b2 ♜b5 26 a4 ♜c7 27 ♞c1 ♜e7 28 ♜f6+ ♜xf6 29 exf6 ♜d7

Or 29...♜d6 30 ♜c5 ♜d7 31 ♞hd1.

30 ♜xb7 ♞b8 31 ♜c6+ ♜d6 32 ♜a7 ♞bd8 33 ♜b6 1-0

Agzamov – Kosikov

Orenburg 1972

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♜d2 ♜c6 4 ♜gf3 ♜f6 5 e5 ♜d7 6 ♜b5

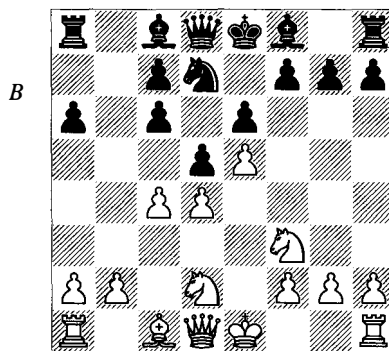
Opening theory prefers 6 ♜e2.

6...a6

The preliminary 6...♜e7 may be more accurate.

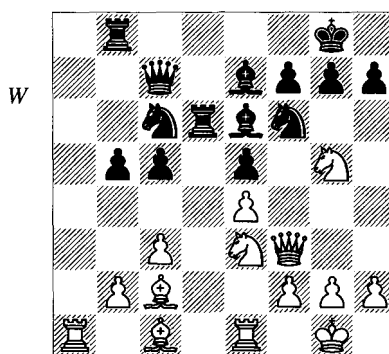
7 ♜xc6 bxc6 8 c4?! (D)

8 ♜b3 is better.



Exercise 32: In Black's place, what would you play?

(For the answer, see page 93.)



Rauzer – Riumin

Leningrad 1936

19 ♜f5!

This is stronger than the exchange 19 ♜xe6 fxe6.

19...♜xf5 20 exf5 h6 21 ♜e4 ♜xe4 22 ♜xe4 ♜f6 23 ♜e3 ♜e7

White's pieces are ideally placed. His light-squared bishop makes a particularly powerful impression, far exceeding the strength of the black knight.

24 b4! c4 25 g3 ♞d7 26 ♞a7 ♞d8

It was worth considering 26...♞xa7 27 ♜xa7 ♞xa7, striving to alter the complexion of the

fight. Now the black position will be increasingly squeezed.

27 ♖xd7 ♜xd7 28 h4 ♔h8?! 29 g4 ♘g8

Alas, 29...♙xh4 30 ♜h3 ♙f6 fails to the reply 31 g5.

30 g5 ♙e7 31 ♖d1 ♜c7 32 f6 ♙xf6

Practically forced; if 32...gxf6 then 33 ♜f5.

33 gxf6 ♘xf6 34 ♙c2 ♖d8 35 ♙xh6 ♖xd1+

36 ♙xd1 e4 37 ♙f4 ♜d8 38 ♜e2 ♘d5 1-0

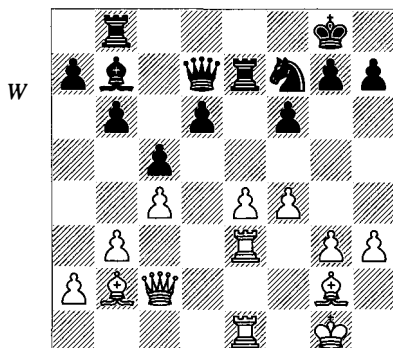
Black resigned without waiting for his opponent's move. There could have followed 39 ♜d2 ♜xh4 40 ♙g5.

Two Bishops in the Middlegame: Associated Factors

Notwithstanding those last few examples, we must be extremely careful in speaking of the advantage of the two bishops in the middlegame. After all, as we have said more than once, the middlegame may contain a whole host of factors no less significant than the bishop-pair.

Planless Play

It often happens that we conduct one phase of the game with great success and achieve a very substantial plus, but then in our contentment we permit ourselves to relax – foolishly! As long as the clock is ticking and the fight continues, we have no right to do that. If we do, we run a very serious risk of losing control over the ongoing course of the struggle.



Euwe – Alatortsev
Leningrad 1934

The assessment of the position is not in any doubt. A spatial plus, the bishop-pair, the overall dominance of the white pieces, the dubious 'activity' of the knight on f7 – what more does White want? The best continuation, as we understand by now, would be a strategy of enhancing the power of the dark-squared bishop by 24 ♜c3 followed by an advance of the g-pawn. Yet White did not resolve to move a pawn that was shielding his king's quarters. Simply content with the overall picture of the battle, he behaved in a patently dilatory way, forgetting that, as Steinitz said, the side possessing the initiative *must* attack.

24 ♔h2? ♜be8

It now turns out that White is under fire; rather than contemplate the position with his head in the clouds, he must come down to earth and think about defending his e-pawn.

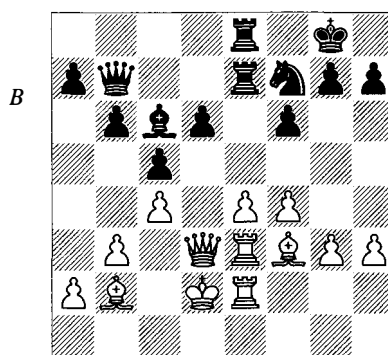
25 ♜c3

Time to wake up?

25...♜c7!

Already it isn't so simple! The straightforward 26 g4? will be met by the counter-stroke 26...d5!.

26 ♙f3 ♙c6 27 ♜d3 ♜b7 28 ♔g1 ♜a8 29 ♙f2 ♜b7 30 ♖e2 ♜a8 31 ♔e1?! ♜b7 32 ♙d2 (D)



White has clearly lost the thread of the game; the 'STOPS' system (his objective positional judgement and, naturally, his focus on the unfolding events) is disrupted. Accordingly his actions lose their coherence.

32...b5! 33 ♙e1

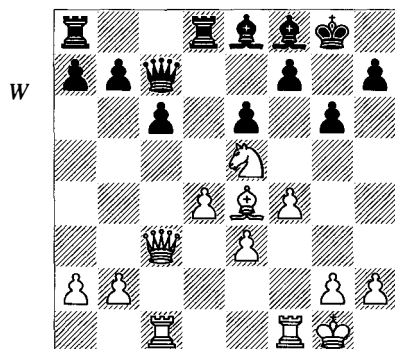
It emerges that the central and queenside area is another 'burning house' for White's king. But then, returning to his 'hearth and home' will take time...

33...bxc4 34 bxc4 f5!

Opening the position and turning everything upside-down.

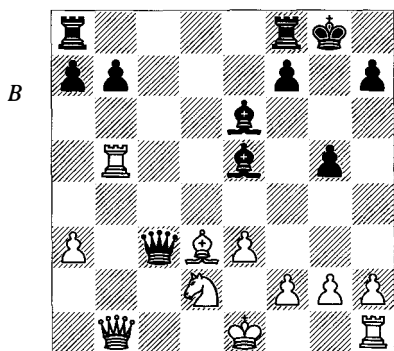
35 ♖c3 ♜b4 36 ♖xb4 cxb4 37 e5 ♙xf3 38 ♙xf3 dxe5 39 ♜fe3 e4

And Black has acquired a material plus.



Muratov – Frumson
Moscow 1976

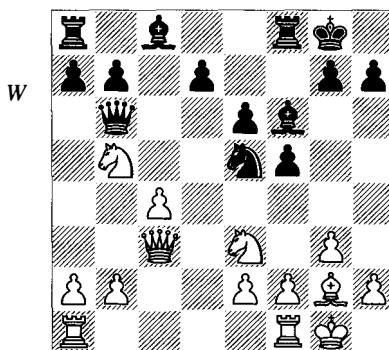
Exercise 33: Choose between the two candidate moves 19 g4 and 19 b4.
(For the answer, see page 93.)



Forintos – Beliavsky
Moscow 1975

Exercise 34: Evaluate the position.
(For the answer, see page 94.)

A lead in development is a very important factor in the evaluation of a position, especially in the opening. A bishop-pair may help compensate for it, but the verdict will always hinge on concrete analysis.



Azmaiparashvili – Yudasin
USSR Ch, Kiev 1986

Black could try to develop his dormant queen-side by removing his queen from b6, then playing ...a6 and ...♖b8, and finally ...b5 (or ...b6). But in an open position with tactical skirmishes about to break out, he can hardly find time for this. He must therefore seek to make the most of his active pieces, and any 'awkwardness' in his opponent's build-up, and complete his development when an opportune moment arises.

15 ♜b4 a6?!

Yudasin stakes everything on a tactical dog-fight. After the game he favoured the solid 15...♙c6; e.g., 16 ♜d2 a6 17 ♙c3.

16 ♜d6 ♙xc4

16...♙c6?! is now risky because 17 ♙d5 exd5 18 ♙xd5+ ♜f7 19 ♙xf7+ ♙xf7 20 ♜d5+ ♙e7 21 ♙d6 ♙d4 22 c5 ♜c6 23 ♜f7+ ♙d8 24 ♜e8+ ♙c7 25 ♜ac1 gives White an attack.

17 ♙xc4 ♜xb5 18 ♜fc1

Threatening 19 a4 ♜b3 20 ♜a3, but Black has a way to keep fighting.

18...a5! 19 ♜c2 ♜a6 20 ♜c7

Threatening 21 ♙d6.

20...♜b4 21 a3 ♜b3 22 ♜ac1 a4?

Azmaiparashvili gave the critical 22...d5! 23 ♙xa5 as favouring White, missing 23...♜a4!; e.g., 24 ♙xb7 (24 b4 ♜xa3) 24...♜a7 25 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 26 ♜xc8+ ♙f7 27 ♙lc7+ ♙g6 28 ♙c5 with a likely draw.

23 ♜b8! d5 24 ♙d2 ♙d7 25 ♜c8! 1-0

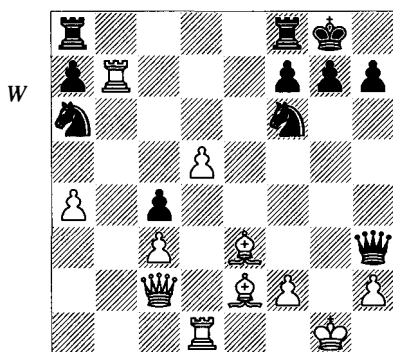
Passed Pawn

This is a very important element of strategy in many positions, including those involving the bishop-pair. In the middlegame, a passed pawn can rarely be approached by the defender's king.

Where then can he find the superior quantity of pieces needed to attack and destroy it? Thus, a passed pawn in the middlegame, a redoubtable force for the active side, becomes the defender's 'first weakness'.

In the endgame, the king can often approach a passed pawn without any risk, and the latter, far from being a force, may prove a tasty morsel for the opponent. But here again, not everything is plain. If the passed pawn belongs to the side with the bishop-pair, it is very dangerous even in the endgame. On the one hand the bishops keep the enemy king away from the pawn; on the other hand they dislodge pieces from blockading positions, thus clearing the pawn's road to promotion.

The conclusion is evident: each position demands its own specific approach.



Hübner – Smyslov
Tilburg 1979

The white king's position has been weakened. But thanks to the general activity of his pieces, his bishop-pair and his dangerous passed pawn, White's game should be preferred.

19 ♖f1 ♜h5 20 ♜e2!

'Speculating' on an exchange. With the disappearance of the queens, the exposed position of White's king would cease to be a worry.

20... ♜g6+ 21 ♖g2 ♜ac8 22 d6!

The thrust by the passed pawn should decide the outcome of the duel.

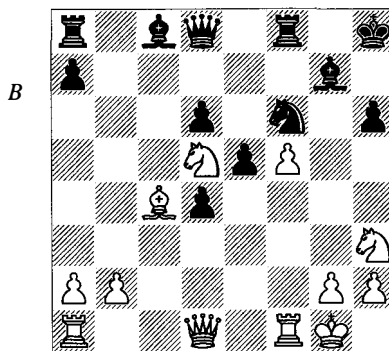
22... ♜c5 23 ♖xc5 ♜xc5 24 d7!

In order to continue his attack, White is even willing to part with his dark-squared bishop.

24... ♜d5 25 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 26 ♜e4!

The aim is achieved. There is no avoiding the queen exchange.

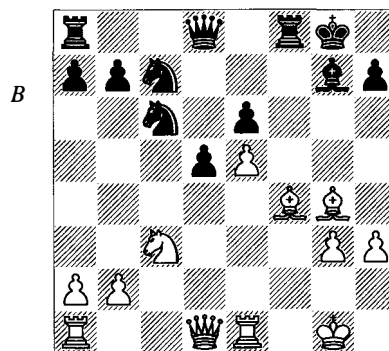
26... ♜xc3 27 ♜xg6 hxg6 28 ♜c7! ♜e2+ 29 ♜f1 ♜f4 30 ♜d5! 1-0



Christiansen – Kasparov
Interzonal tournament, Moscow 1982

Exercise 35:

- 1) Evaluate the position.
 - 2) What would you play if you had Black?
- (For the answer, see page 94.)



A. Kozlov – Dorfman
Odessa 1969

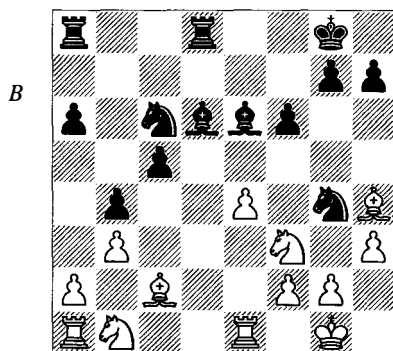
Exercise 36: What would you play if you were in Black's place?

(For the answer, see page 95.)

The 'Advantage of the Knight-Pair'

Of course, in chess terminology no such concept exists. Yet every joke contains a grain of

truth. There are some positions, especially in the middlegame, where the knights perform gyrations that make the opponent's head reel.



Foguelman – Smyslov
Leipzig Olympiad 1960

The undeveloped state of White's queenside and the great activity of Black's pieces allow us to evaluate the position as a win for Smyslov.

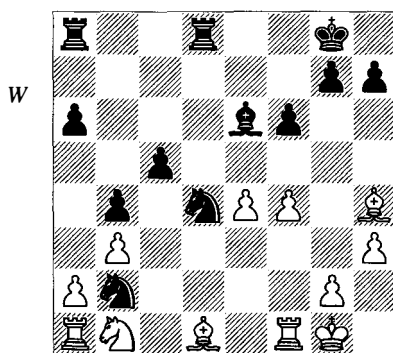
23...♙e5!

Black isn't worried about exchanging a bishop for a knight in an open position.

24 ♖xe5 ♜gxe5 25 f4 ♜d4!

Off we go!

26 ♙d1 ♜d3 27 ♜f1 ♜b2! (D)



The cavalry gets through!

28 ♜d2

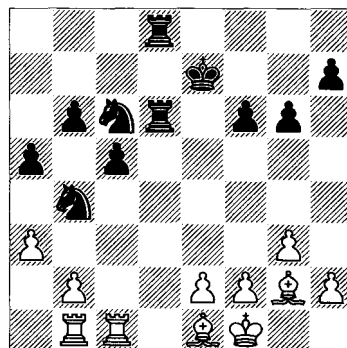
Managed it at last. Or so it seems...

28...♜xd1 29 ♜fxd1 ♙e2+ 30 ♙h2 ♜c3!

The decisive stab. The rest isn't interesting; White resigned eight moves later.

Often a knight's jump is so unpredictable that it induces errors from the opponent in what looks like the most harmless of situations.

B



Psakhis – Speelman
Hastings 1987/8

The play has nearly entered the endgame stage, in which, as we shall soon discover, the bishop-pair is an indisputable advantage.

However, Black has three trumps at his disposal: possession of the only open file, the poor coordination of the white pieces, and ... the 'advantage of the knight-pair'.

What is Black to play now?

White has good prospects after 21...♜d5?! 22 e3 followed by ♙e2 and ♜d1, challenging the d-file. Objectively, Black should play the solid 21...♜a6, when there is everything to play for: Black keeps his grip on the d-file, while it is hard for White to engineer a truly effective pawn-break. However, in both cases White is in control of the game. Speelman found a highly creative, albeit unsound, alternative, which succeeded in unsettling an experienced grandmaster over the board.

21...♜a2?!!

The knight boldly steps into a corner from which it is unlikely ever to escape, but White must solve some very concrete problems.

22 ♜c4

After 22 ♙xc6 ♜xc1 23 ♙a4 ♜d1! 24 ♙xd1 ♜xd1, all White's pieces are completely paralysed.

22...♜d4

22...♙e5 23 ♜e4 ♙f7 24 ♜h4 (24 ♜a1?! ♜d1 is OK for Black) 24...♜d1 (24...♙g7 25 ♜a1) 25 ♜xh7+ ♙g8 26 ♜xd1 ♜xd1 leaves White with an extra pawn, but the situation remains complex.

23 b3?!

23 ♜a1! is critical. 23...♜b3 24 ♜xa2 ♜d1, and now:

a) 25 ♖c2? ♖b1 (25...♟d2+ is simpler) 26 ♟e4! (26 e3? loses to 26...♞dd1 27 ♞e2 ♟d2+) 26...♞dd1 27 ♟g2 ♞xe1 28 ♞c3 ♞g1+ 29 ♟h3 a4 30 ♟xb1 ♞xb1 and a comical situation arises with an imprisoned rook on a2, offering White no saving chances whatever in spite of his extra exchange.

b) 25 ♞e4+ ♟f8 26 f4! (after 26 e3 ♖b1!, the threats of 27...♞dd1 and 27...♟c1 are hard to meet) and it is not clear how Black is to continue.

23...♟b5! 24 ♖b2

After 24 ♞a1 ♞d2! 25 ♟xd2 ♞xd2, Black's compensation for the exchange would not be in doubt.

24...♟ac3!

Not 24...♟bc3? 25 ♞xa2 ♟xa2 26 ♞c2.

25 a4

The variations 25 ♟xc3? ♟xc3 26 ♞xc3? ♞d1# and 25 ♞xc3 ♟xc3 26 ♟xc3 ♞d1+ 27 ♟e1 ♞a1, with ...♞dd1 to follow, are of course not at all to White's liking.

25...♟d1!

The raids by the black knights continue, and there is no telling how they will end. White could of course follow the line of least resistance with 26 ♞a2 ♟d4 27 ♞a3, but the position would then acquire an irrational, unpredictable and uncontrollable streak, in which the 'advantage of the knight-pair' would become especially dangerous.

White therefore resolves to sacrifice the exchange, banking on the imprisonment of Black's surviving knight.

26 ♖b1 ♟a3 27 ♞cc1!?

After 27 ♞e4+ ♟f7 28 ♞c1 ♟b2 29 ♞e3 ♞d1 30 ♞ec3 the situation on the board remains extremely unclear.

27...♟xb1 28 ♞xb1

Intending ♟e4-d3.

28...f5 29 ♟b7

He now aims to bring the bishop round via a6.

29...g5! 30 ♟a6 f4! 31 ♟d3?!

The question, as always, is how to evaluate the position. What is White playing for?

Although Black is the exchange up, it is fair to assess the situation as equal in view of the incarcerated knight. Therefore the most suitable course is waiting tactics, with something like 31 ♟c4, assenting to a draw. White's last move

reveals that Psakhis is either overrating his possibilities or not weighing them up at all.

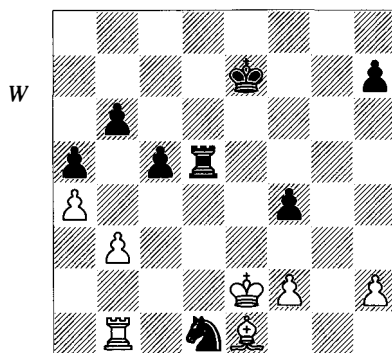
31...♞xd3! 32 exd3 ♞xd3 33 ♟e2 ♞d5!

Precision is always essential. 33...♞d4? is a mistake in view of 34 gxf4 gxf4 35 ♟d2 ♟xf2 36 ♟c3 ♞d3 37 ♟e1.

34 gxf4

Not, of course, 34 ♞xd1?? f3+. Nor is 34 ♟d2 ♟xf2 any good to White, but a possibility is 34 ♟f3 ♟c3! 35 ♟xc3 ♞d3+ 36 ♟g4 ♞xc3 37 ♟xg5, going into a drawn rook endgame.

34...gxf4 (D)



35 ♞c1?!

In time-trouble, White loses control of events (the 'STOPS' system breaks down!) and releases the knight from its prison. After the correct 35 ♟f3 ♞d4 36 ♟e2 ♞d5 37 ♟f3, a peaceful end to the struggle would be unavoidable.

35...♟b2!

Hooray! Freedom!

36 ♟c3 ♟d3 37 ♞g1?

This is the proverbial last straw that breaks the camel's back.

The drawing margin in chess is quite considerable! Notwithstanding the series of inaccuracies and errors that White had already committed, the position was still drawable. The correct course was 37 ♞d1! ♟b4 (not 37...f3+? 38 ♟xf3) 38 ♞xd5! (not 38 ♟xb4?? f3+) 38...♟xd5 39 ♟e5 ♟e6 40 ♟b8 ♟f5 41 ♟f3, and despite the pawn minus, White is saved by the 'minor exchange'. By attacking the pawns on b6 and f4 with his bishop, he prevents Black from regrouping effectively.

But evidently all that cavorting by the black knights had set Psakhis's head spinning so much that he totally lost his bearings.

37...♟b4 38 ♞g7+

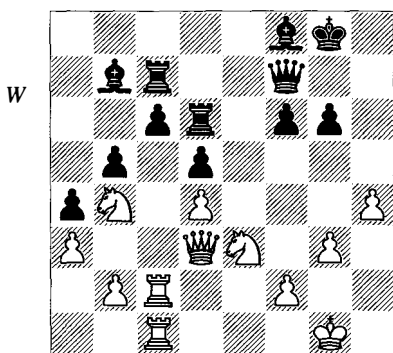
He also fails to save himself with 38 ♖xb4 axb4 39 ♖g7+ ♕d6 40 ♖xh7 f3+! 41 ♕e3 ♖d1.

38...♕f8 39 ♖b2

Or 39 ♖xh7 f3+.

39...♖d3 0-1

The 'advantage of the knight-pair' is especially palpable in the middlegame when the players start to trade combinative punches in the style of a boxing match.



Botvinnik – Romanovsky
Leningrad 1933

46 h5!

The sealed move. The white knights now set out on their hard-hitting raids.

46...gxh5 47 ♖f5 ♖e6 48 ♖xd5 ♖d7 49 ♖b6?!

49 ♖f4 ♖e5 (49...♖e8 50 ♖d1!) 50 ♖g6! is good for White.

49...♖d8 50 d5 ♖e8?

If 50...cxd5? then 51 ♖c7.

However, Black missed his chance here, as after 50...♖h7!, there are too many pins for White to make any progress with his attack, and the outcome is likely to be a murky ending with few winning chances for White. This is the type of resource that a modern computer finds without batting an electronic eyelid, but can completely escape the attention of a future world champion given the irrational appearance of the position that it brings about.

51 ♖d4

The blows from the white knights are becoming unbearable.

51...♖e6 52 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 53 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 54 ♖xc6 ♖d6

Not 54...♖xc6 because of the zwischenzug 55 ♖g6+.

55 ♖f5?

Such a pity. In time-trouble, the logical conclusion to the game is botched. After 55 ♖c8!! ♖xc8 (55...♖e5 56 ♖e6 ♖f8 57 ♖e7) 56 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 57 ♖g6+, followed by ♖xf6+ and ♖xd6, the exploitation of White's extra material would have been a matter of fairly simple technique.

But then Botvinnik observed several times that the calculation of variations and combinative vision were not his strongest points.

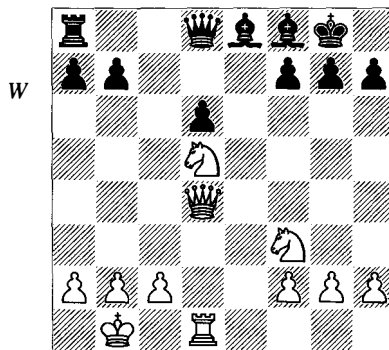
55...♕g7! 56 ♖c8?! ♖e5 57 ♖b6?!

Now 57 ♖e6 comes too late due to 57...♖g6. However, 57 ♖c5 keeps some chances alive.

57...♖xd5

and the game soon ended in a draw.

Knights are also dangerous when they have outposts in the centre.



Anderssen – L. Paulsen
Vienna 1873

17 ♖d2! ♖c6 18 ♖e4 f5?

A mistake we are well acquainted with already – pawn moves without good reason in a bad position. It is better to face up to the difficulty of the situation and settle for 18...♖xd5!? 19 ♖xd5 ♖c7 (20 ♖xd6?? ♖d8), going over to static defence.

19 ♖ec3 ♖d7 20 a3

You should never forget about creating some *luft* – provided of course there are not more urgent matters to attend to, and provided also that the pawn move does not constitute a serious weakening in itself.

20...♖f7 21 h3! a6 22 g4! ♖e8 23 f4 ♖e6 24 g5 b5 25 h4 ♖e8 26 ♖d3

The defects of Black's 18th move begin to emerge.

26...♖b8 27 h5 a5 28 b4!

The weakening of the pawn shelter round White's king is insignificant; Black is in no position to launch an attack.

28...axb4 29 axb4 ♖xh5 30 ♖xf5 ♖f7 31 ♖d3

Threatening 32 ♖h1.

31...♗d7 32 ♗e4 ♖f5

If 32...♗f5 then 33 ♗ef6+.

33 ♖h1 ♖e8 34 ♗ef6+! gxf6 35 ♗xf6+ ♖f7 36 ♖xh7+ ♗g7 37 ♖xg7+! ♖xg7 38 ♗xe8+ ♖f8 39 ♖xf5+ ♗xf5 40 ♗xd6

and Black soon resigned.

The Problem of Exchanging

As already noted, the question of exchanging pieces is one of the keys to a chess-player's level of strategic understanding. And indeed, when we ask about the bishop-pair and whether it constitutes an advantage, the problem of exchanging is highly relevant. When we envisage an exchange, its appropriateness can by no means always be confirmed by variations and calculation. Knowledge and logic have to come to our aid here.

Queens – who benefits from exchanging them? We can readily understand the answer: the exchange favours the two bishops, since it reduces the tactics and leads towards the endgame, where the opposition of bishop and knight becomes the 'minor exchange'.

What about **rooks**?

Suppose that in a position with two bishops (against bishop and knight or two knights), each player also has two rooks. Now consider two questions before reading on:

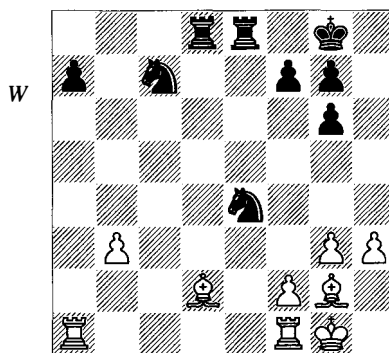
- 1) Who benefits from exchanging one pair of rooks?
- 2) Who benefits from exchanging both pairs of rooks?

On the one hand, the rooks reinforce the power of the bishops. But...

The presence on the board of two pairs of rooks, capable of setting up mating threats or

conquering weak points by their own strength unaided by other pieces, imparts a middlegame character to the play. Hence the conclusion: *in positions with the bishop-pair, the presence of two pairs of rooks is strategically favourable to the side possessing knights.*

The expediency of exchanging the second pair of rooks depends on the specific situation.



Gulko – Vasiukov
Moscow Ch 1983

There should be no special doubts about the verdict on this position. The growing power of the two bishops is indisputable. The only thing that may confuse the issue is the great activity of the black rooks and the danger that White may overlook some gyration performed by the black knights. In the absence of outposts in the centre, however, deploying the knights is not at all a simple matter.

23 ♗a5!

A move leading to the exchange of a pair of rooks and thereby giving the position, definitively, the character of an endgame.

23...♗d7 24 ♖ad1 ♖xd1

Played with great reluctance, but there is nothing else.

25 ♖xd1 ♗b5 26 ♗f1 a6 27 ♖d5 ♖b8 28 ♗g2 ♗f6 29 ♖d1

The position has clearly assumed a settled character, with Black deprived of any serious counterplay. In such a situation, the main thing for White is not to fall for a knight fork. Therefore prophylactic thinking and the maxim 'Do not rush!' come to the fore. As for victory ... time itself will deliver it.

29...♗e4 30 ♖d5 ♗f6 31 ♖c5 ♗e4 32 ♖c4 ♖e8

Again we come up against the problem of exchanges. The point is that Black must avoid exchanging the second pair of rooks, since in this case the ending with two bishops against two knights is hopeless for the weaker side. For that reason 32...♖b6 33 ♖b4! ♖xb4 34 ♖xb4 ♖b5 35 ♖f3 would be bad for Black.

33 ♖d3 ♖f6 34 ♖c5

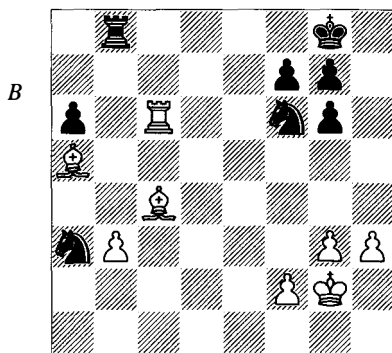
In such positions, when realizing your advantage it is most important not to give the opponent any extra counterchances. The hasty 34 ♖c6? ♖d4 35 ♖b6 ♖d7! would present the black knights with chances to stir up a whirlpool.

34...♖b8 35 ♖c4!

There are of course other ways of exploiting the advantage of the bishop-pair (by this time the term applies without reservation), but Gulko chooses a path involving the transformation of the advantage.

35...♖a3! 36 ♖c6 (D)

White is prepared to exchange a bishop for a knight, but in a manner that creates a passed pawn. In the event of 36 ♖xa6? ♖xb3 37 ♖c8+ ♖h7 38 ♖f8, the warfare would be confined to the kingside only, and after 38...♖c2! (threatening 39...♖a3) Black would retain realistic drawing chances.



36...♖xc4 37 ♖xc4 ♖d7?

Black displays weak prophylactic thinking and foresight, reckoning only on 38 ♖xa6. In that event he would indeed draw comfortably after 38...♖c8 39 ♖a7 ♖e5.

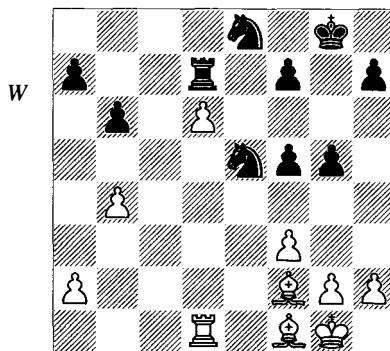
White faces a more troublesome task after 37...♖a8. He preserves the advantage by 38 ♖c7! ♖f8 39 ♖b4+ ♖g8 40 ♖a3 a5 41 c5 ♖d5 42 ♖b7, but Black's defensive possibilities are not yet exhausted.

38 c5 ♖b5 39 ♖c8+ ♖h7 40 c6 ♖b6 41 ♖xb6! ♖xb6 42 ♖f3

The rook endgame that has now come about is hopeless for Black, as he is playing 'a king down'.

42...a5 43 ♖e4 a4 44 ♖d5 1-0

The variation 44...♖a6 45 c7 ♖a5+ 46 ♖c6 a3 47 ♖d8 a2 48 c8♖ a1♖ 49 ♖h8# is convincing enough.



Orekhov – G. Akopian
Moscow 1973

In this case, the presence of a rook splendidly complements the bishop-pair.

31 ♖e1!

Of course 31 ♖b5? would be a mistake in view of 31...♖xd6 32 ♖e1 ♖e6.

31...f6 32 f4!

Once again it is no good playing 32 ♖b5? ♖d8 33 f4? ♖xd6.

32...gxf4 33 ♖b5 ♖d8

Counting on the trappy variation 34 ♖xe5 fxe5 35 ♖xe8. Then 35...♖xe8? is met by 36 ♖h4, but instead after 35...♖xd6 the position is, to say the least, unclear.

34 ♖h4!!

The white bishops have simply gone wild. Now 35 ♖xe5 is the threat.

34...♖xd6 35 ♖xf6 ♖c8 36 ♖xe5

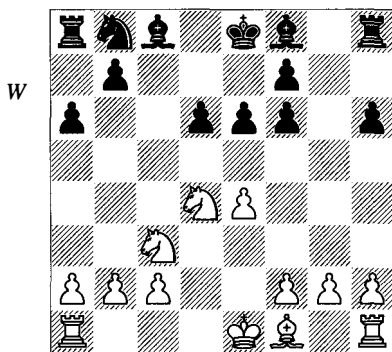
He could also win with 36 ♖a6.

36...♖c1+ 37 ♖f1! ♖c4 38 ♖e8+! ♖f7 39 ♖c8 b5 40 ♖g5 ♖b1 41 ♖xf4 ♖xb4 42 ♖c7+ 1-0

Regarding the problem of exchanging, there is one more question to be clarified. If the material balance is two bishops and a knight versus

two knights and a bishop (with or without the addition of other pieces), who benefits from a knight exchange?

Two bishops in themselves can prove a formidable force. But if a 'spice' such as the cunning of a knight is added to them, a 'cordon bleu' dish may result. All the same, if the opponent's 'advantage of the knight-pair' starts to become a menace, the safer course for the side with the two bishops is to exchange knights at the first opportunity.



Suetin – Yuferov

USSR Team Ch, Moscow 1972

It is too early of course to pass judgement on the diagram position. However, Sicilian Defence specialists take the view that in the majority of cases the queen exchange favours Black. Add to this the fact that he has the bishop-pair, and his position may be considered the more acceptable. But let us see how the game proceeded.

10 ♖e2 h5

Of course Black shouldn't allow 11 ♗h5.

11 h4 ♗d7 12 a4?!

Any change in the pawn-structure demands extreme circumspection. Of course White would like to prevent ...b5, but is it worth doing this at the cost of weakening b4?

12...♟c6 13 ♟b3

Leaving Black's 'spicy' piece where it is. But then every exchange brings you closer to the endgame, where the advantage of the bishop-pair becomes a real threat.

13...♟c8 14 a5 ♟b4

Now the knight seriously begins adding its strength to that of the bishops.

15 0-0-0 e5!

With an advantage in the centre and the bishop-pair, Black launches a pawn offensive (in the Steinitz manner), without worrying too much about the weaknesses created in his own camp.

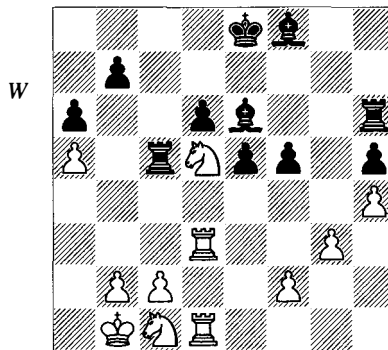
16 ♟b1 f5! 17 ♗f3 ♗e7 18 exf5 ♗xf5 19 ♟d2 ♟c7 20 ♗e4 ♗e6 21 g3 f5 22 ♗d5 ♟xd5

Here is the 'spice' in the dish.

23 ♟xd5 ♟c4 24 ♟hd1 ♗f8 25 ♟d3 ♟h6

There is no question of any 'advantage of the knight-pair' here. The knight may be beautifully placed on d5, but it isn't threatening Black with anything concrete. Furthermore, it may be eliminated at any time by the e6-bishop (whereas the knight itself has no exchanging options!).

26 ♟c1 ♟c5 (D)



27 b4?

Another example of a faulty assessment of the position. White is clearly overrating the importance of his knight on d5. Instead 27 ♟b3 was correct, tacitly asking the opponent: "Will you take a draw then, sir?"

27...♟c4 28 ♟a2 f4! 29 gxf4?!

The lesser evil was 29 ♟ac3 ♗f5! (but not, of course, 29...e4? 30 ♟d4) 30 ♟3d2 fxg3 31 fxg3, though Black's advantage is obvious even then.

29...♗xd5!

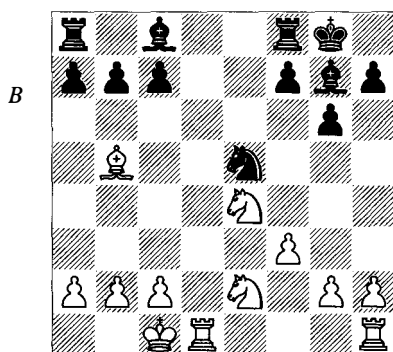
A transformation of the advantage.

30 ♟xd5 ♟xf4 31 b5

What is White to do? Black's strategy is prevailing. White therefore tries to work up some initiative on the queenside at the cost of a pawn.

31...♟xh4 32 c3 ♟h7

Black has achieved a material plus, for which White doesn't have adequate compensation. Yuferov achieved victory on the 71 st move.



Blackburne – Em. Lasker
Match (game 7), London 1892

The outward activity of White's pieces is deceptive, as indeed the next few moves demonstrate.

15...a6 16 ♖d3 f5!

This is precisely a case where Black doesn't hurry to exchange his remaining knight but chooses a strategy of confining the enemy bishop with pawn-barriers.

17 ♜c3 ♙e6 18 ♖b1 ♜fd8 19 ♜f4 ♙f7 20 ♙e2 ♜c6 21 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 22 ♜d1 ♙e8!

Here is Black's answer to the question of exchanging rooks. An exchange would suit White, who is now simply short of space. The threat is ...♙xc3, ...g5 and ...♜xe2.

23 ♙f1 b5 24 ♜d3 ♙d4! 25 ♜e2 ♙b6

Transferring the bishop to a more promising diagonal.

26 b3 ♙g7

Until the tactical clashes begin, you have to think about activating your pieces to the full; in the endgame this includes centralizing the king.

27 c3 ♖f6 28 ♖c2 ♜e7 29 ♜ec1 ♜d5 30 ♖b2 b4! 31 ♜xb4

There is no salvation in 31 cxb4 ♙d4+ 32 ♖a3 ♜e3 either.

31...♜e3 32 ♜e1 ♜c4+ 33 ♙xc4 ♜xe1

White's position is hopeless, and this would have been the right moment to cease resistance. Blackburne prolonged the fight, however:

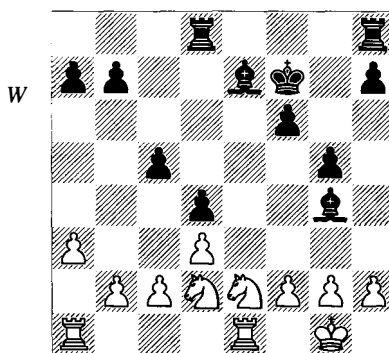
34 ♙xa6 ♜g1 35 g3 ♜g2+ 36 ♖a3 ♜xh2 37 ♜e2 ♜g2 38 ♜c2 g5 39 ♙d3 h5 40 ♖b4 ♙f2 41 a4 c5+ 42 ♖b5 ♙xb3 43 a5 c4 44 ♙xc4 ♙xc2 45 a6 ♙d1 46 ♜d4 ♙xd4 47 cxd4 ♙xf3 48 d5 ♙e2 49 ♙xe2 ♜xe2 50 a7 ♜a2 0-1

Two Bishops in the Endgame

In the final stage of the game, we can speak of the advantage of the bishop-pair with a good deal of conviction.

The power of the two bishops noticeably increases as the quantity of pawns and pieces on the board diminishes – in other words, as the endgame approaches.

As already noted, in the bishop's struggle against the knight, the latter's actions need to be restricted by pawns. "On the other hand the knight is better at utilizing an outpost square from which it cannot be dislodged. Therefore you need to advance your pawns in such a way as to give yourself as few weak squares as possible. To this end, the rook's pawns are best suited. A move with a rook's pawn weakens only one square (the one alongside the pawn), whereas any other pawn move weakens two squares." (Euwe).

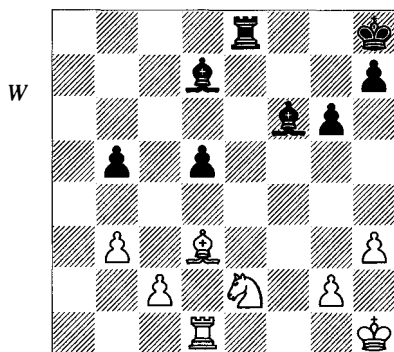


Richter – Tarrasch
Nuremberg 1896

Exercise 37:

- 1) Evaluate the position.
 - 2) Suggest a plan of action for White.
- (For the answer, see page 95.)

In the diagram overleaf, Black's advantage, thanks to the two bishops, is obvious. Yet White's superior pawn-structure and lack of weaknesses allow him to count on a successful defence. To this end it is essential to play constructively, and above all to solve the problem



Michell – Tartakower
Marienbad 1925

of the knight by establishing strongpoints for it in the centre of the board.

40 ♖g1 ♗g7 41 ♖f1?!

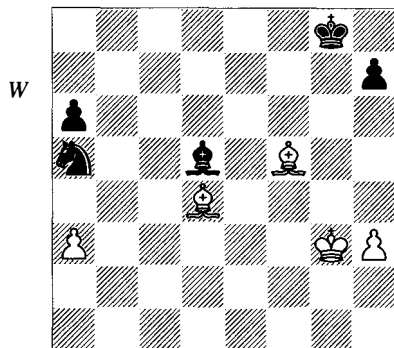
Unnecessary caution, as the more active 41 ♖f2! is playable. White does not have to fear 41...♙h4+, since after 42 ♖g1, with the positional threats of 43 ♖a1 and 43 ♖d4, Black has no more reasonable move than 42...♙f6, simply repeating the position.

41...♙c6

Exercise 38: Suggest a plan of defence for White.

(For the answer, see page 96.)

An ending where one side has the advantage of the bishop-pair has an interesting peculiarity when compared with other types of ending. In this case, reducing the number of pawns is not by any means always a way of saving the game, since the difference in strength between bishop and knight increases as the board empties.



Ye Rongguang – Nunn
World Team Ch, Lucerne 1989

Despite the outward simplicity and seeming harmlessness of the situation, this endgame must be recognized as absolutely hopeless for Black. This is explained first and foremost by White's advantage of the bishop-pair.

The plan for realizing White's advantage is simple if he is guided by the principle of two weaknesses. Curtailing the black king's freedom of action by attacking the h-pawn, White endeavours to penetrate with his own king on the queenside. An important detail is that the knight will be cast in the role of Buridan's ass, torn between the two fronts – especially since the a-pawn and h-pawn are so far apart.

44 ♖f4 ♖c4 45 ♙c5 ♗g7 46 h4

The tempo of the game is not critical, since Black has no counterplay whatever. Therefore, true to the 'Do not rush!' principle, White should utilize all possibilities for improving his position.

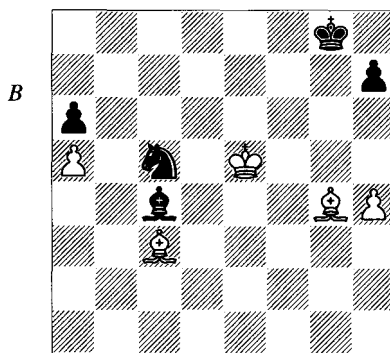
46...♗g8?!

46...h6 is an improvement.

47 ♗g5 ♖e5 48 ♖f6

Note the difference in activity between the kings. According to the conventional endgame values of the pieces, White is virtually playing with an 'extra rook'. But this decisive disparity resulted from the advantage of the bishop-pair.

48...♖f3 49 ♙f2 ♙b3 50 ♙g4 ♙d5 51 a4 ♖d2 52 ♙e1 ♖f3 53 ♙g3 ♖d2 54 a5 ♙c4 55 ♙e1 ♖b3 56 ♙c3 ♖c5 57 ♙e5! (D)



The time has now come for his majesty to prove his worth.

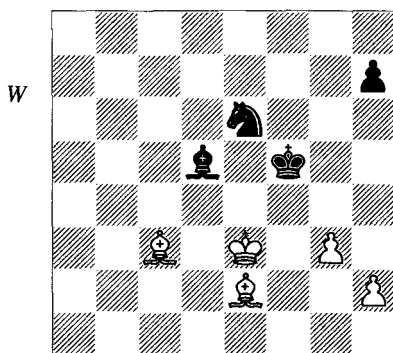
57...♖b3 58 ♖d6 ♖f7 59 ♙h5+!

"Where do you think you're going? Get back in your place!"

59...♙g8 60 ♖c6 ♖f8 61 ♙b4+ ♖g7 62 ♖b6 ♖f6 63 ♙g4 ♖c1

On 63...♗g6 64 ♖c8 ♗h5 65 ♙e7, Black's attempt at counterplay is easily dealt with – especially since after 65...♗g6 66 ♙xa6 ♙xa6 67 ♗xa6 ♜a5 68 ♗xa5 White is left with the 'good' dark-squared bishop which controls h8 and thus guarantees victory.

64 ♙c8 ♜d3 65 ♙a3 1-0



Minev – Wood
USA 1983

Notwithstanding his extra pawn and the advantage of the two bishops, it might seem impossible for White to win this endgame in view of the tiny quantity of pawns on the board. Furthermore, the events will basically take place on one flank, so that Black's knight (in contrast to the previous example) will feel much more self-assured. However, let us not jump to conclusions but follow how the game went.

1 h4!

The straightforward line 1 ♙d3+?! ♗g4 2 ♙xh7 ♗h3 3 ♙f5+ ♗xh2 4 ♙e5 ♜g5 leaves White with no more than minimal chances of victory.

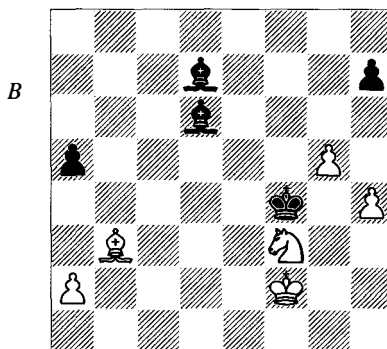
Exercise 39: Four candidate moves suggest themselves – 1...♗g6, 1...♙b3, 1...♜f8 and 1...h6. Which are you going to choose?

(For the answer, see page 97.)

In the following diagram, White has an extra pawn, but the two bishops plus an active position mean that Black has an undoubted advantage. The only question is whether it will be enough to win.

41...♙c5+ 42 ♗g2

Not 42 ♗e2? ♙b5+.



Timoshchenko – Khalifman
USSR Armed Forces Ch, Tashkent 1987

42...♙c6 43 ♙d1 a4!

It's essential for Black to push the a-pawn as far he can. The hasty 43...♗g4? would allow White to get in first with 44 a4!. There could follow 44...♙e3 45 h5! ♗xh5 (45...♙xg5 46 ♗f2! is equal) 46 ♗g3 ♙d5 47 ♙c2, when a draw is the likely outcome.

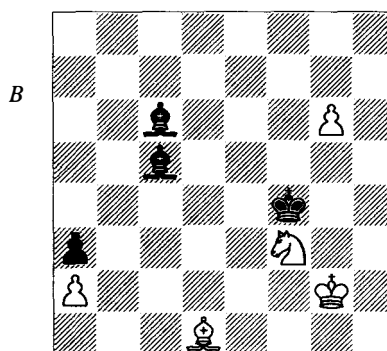
44 h5

Passive defence loses quickly: 44 ♙e2 a3 and 45...♙d5.

44...a3 45 g6 hxg6

The careless 45...h6?? would even lead to a win for White after 46 g7 ♙d5 47 ♙b3.

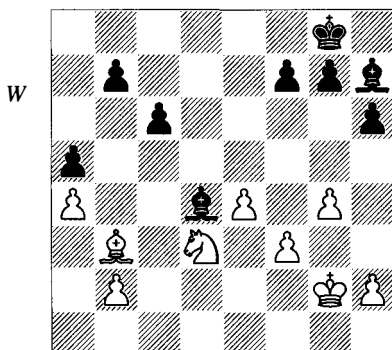
46 hxg6 (D)



Exercise 40: Choose between the candidate moves 46...♙d4 and 46...♙d5.

(For the answer, see page 97.)

The advantage of the bishop-pair becomes especially palpable in an endgame with asymmetrical pawns, that is with passed pawns on opposite wings or the possibility of creating them.



Mikenas – Smyslov
USSR Ch, Moscow 1944

White's position might seem perfectly acceptable. For one thing his king is nearer the centre, and then the black bishop on h7 is shut out of the game. But the point is that the forces are not yet in contact. White has no possibilities to use the assets of his position and intensify the conflict. And we shall see that Mikenas doesn't know how to oppose Black's advantage of the bishop-pair.

34 ♖f1 ♜f8 35 ♙c4 ♚e7 36 b3?!

In anticipation of Black's next move, it was worth considering 36 h4!?

36...g5!

Fixing the kingside pawns on light squares and securing an inroad for the king on the squares of the other colour.

37 ♚e2 f6 38 ♜e1 ♙g6 39 ♜c2 ♙g1 40 h3 ♜d6 41 ♙g8 ♙c5! 42 ♜e1 ♙e5 43 ♜d3+ ♜d4 44 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 45 ♙e3 b5

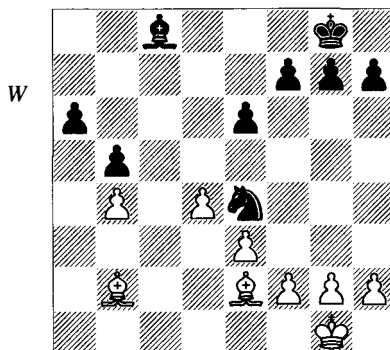
Preparing to create an outside passed pawn.

46 axb5

There is no improvement in 46 ♙e6 bxa4 47 bxa4 ♜b4 48 f4 gxf4+ 49 ♜xf4 ♜xa4 50 e5 fxe5+ 51 ♜xe5 ♜b4, winning for Black.

46...cxb5 47 f4 gxf4+ 48 ♜xf4 ♜d4! 49 ♙d5 a4 50 bxa4 bxa4 51 h4 a3 52 h5 ♙xe4! 53 ♙a2 ♙d5 54 ♙b1 ♜c3 0-1

By contrast with the last example, Black's position in the following diagram doesn't look so cheerless, since, notwithstanding the asymmetrical pawn position, he has an important outpost square on c4. Yet the advantage of the bishop-pair in the ending is still of great significance, which means that Black has no simple defensive task ahead of him.



Gheorghiu – F. Olafsson
Zonal tournament, Athens 1969

21 f3 ♜d6 22 ♙c3

Here 22 e4? would be premature on account of 22...f5!.

22...♙b7 23 g4! f5?!

White's last move has provoked Black into unwarranted activity. It would have been better to think about the eventual construction of a fortress and play 23...f6, when 24 e4 can be met by 24...♜c4, preparing the blockading advance ...e5. The move played creates tension in the pawn position to Black's own detriment.

24 h3! ♜f7 25 ♜f2 ♙d5 26 ♙d3 ♙b7 27 ♙e1!

Do you remember the rule? Possessing the advantage of the bishop-pair, you need to demonstrate the power of the bishop that has no opposite number. In this case it is the dark-squared one.

27...♙d5 28 ♜g2 ♙c4?!

Conducting a planless, ill-considered and impulsive defence, Black completely loses control of events. He should bolster the f5-point by 28...g6 and subsequently try to create a fortress with ...♜e7-d7 and ...♜f7, covering the dark-square weaknesses as best he can.

29 ♙c2 ♙d5

Now 29...g6 allows White to carry out the e4 advance.

30 gxf5! exf5 31 ♙g3 ♜c4 32 ♜f2 ♜d2

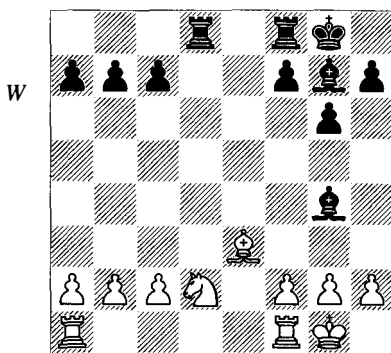
If 32...g6 then 33 e4, strategically concluding the struggle by creating two connected passed pawns.

33 ♙xf5 ♙xf3 34 ♙c8 ♙d5 35 ♜e2 ♜e4 36 ♙e5 g5 37 ♙xa6 ♙c4+ 38 ♜f3 ♜f6 39 ♙xf6!

The simplest solution.

39...♙xf6 40 ♖c8 ♜d5+ 41 e4 ♜f7 42 e5+ 1-0

But even with a symmetrical pawn-structure, the two bishops in the ending are a redoubtable force, especially in an open position.



English – Steinitz
London 1883

16 c3 ♜fe8 17 ♘b3 b6! 18 h3 ♜e6 19 ♜fd1?!

White mechanically plays the ‘formally correct’ moves without thinking of defending according to a plan. Considering that the strategic struggle in this position centres on the confrontation between the knight and the light-squared bishop, White ought to have preferred 19 ♘d4!? ♜d7 20 a4.

19...c5!

Restricting White’s bishop as well as his knight.

20 ♜g5 f6 21 ♜f4 ♙f7 22 f3 g5 23 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 24 ♜e3 h6

Steinitz prepares to activate his dark-squared bishop; at the same time he plans an advance of his pawns to restrict the enemy bishop’s action still further.

25 ♜e1 f5 26 f4?!

White understandably doesn’t want to allow ...f4, but now some new centres of conflict arise.

26...♜f6 27 g3 a5!

Using the wing pawns to hem in the knight, in a way that we have seen before.

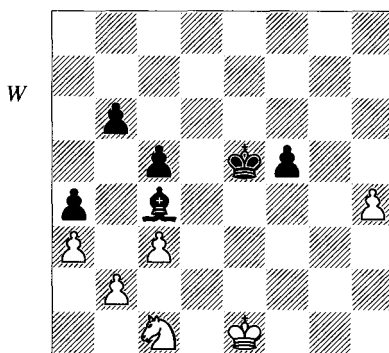
28 ♘c1 a4 29 a3 ♜c4 30 ♙f2 gxf4!

Black could also play 30...♜d5!?, preparing the advance ...b5-b4.

31 ♜xf4 ♜g5!

After the exchange of dark-squared bishops, the helplessness of the knight becomes obvious. Black now threatens to break in on White’s second rank with his rook.

32 ♜xg5 hxg5 33 ♙e3 ♙f6 34 h4 gxh4 35 gxh4 ♜e8+ 36 ♙f2 ♜xe1 37 ♙xe1 ♙e5 (D)



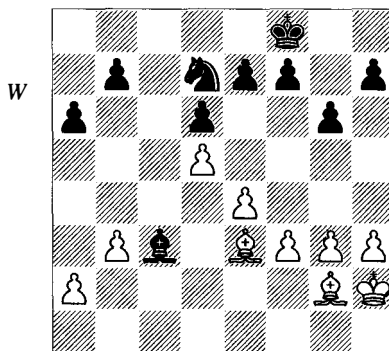
38 ♘e2 ♜xe2!

The transition to a pawn endgame always demands precise calculation.

39 ♙xe2 ♙f4 40 c4 ♙g4 41 ♙e3 f4+!

Not, of course, 41...♙xh4? 42 ♙f4, when it is White who wins.

42 ♙e4 f3 43 ♙e3 ♙g3 0-1



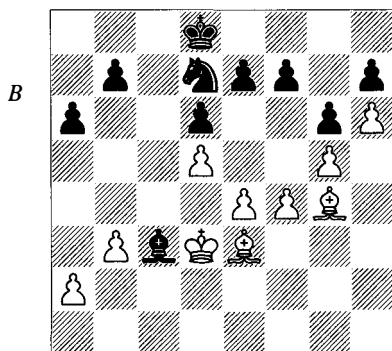
Vasiukov – Sigurjonsson
Reykjavik 1968

Thanks to the advantage of the bishop-pair and the spatial preponderance, the verdict on the position is readily understandable: White has a very large advantage.

1 ♜f1 ♙e8 2 ♙g2 ♙d8 3 f4 ♙c7 4 ♙f3 ♘f6 5 g4 ♘d7 6 g5 ♙d8 7 ♜f2 ♙c7 8 h4 ♙d8 9 ♜h3 ♙c7 10 ♙e2 ♙d8 11 ♜g4 ♙c7 12 h5 ♙d8 13 h6

The first stage in the plan of playing against two weaknesses is accomplished. But what next?

13...♖c7 14 ♖e3 ♘d8 15 ♘d3 (D)

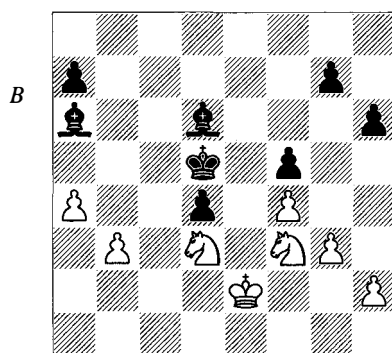


Exercise 41: Choose between the candidate moves 15...♖a5 and 15...♖b2.

(For the answer, see page 97.)

Two Bishops against Two Knights in the Endgame

In open positions, a bishop, as a rule, is stronger than a knight. But the superiority of two bishops over two knights is especially tangible in the ending.



Suttles – Tal
Hastings 1973/4

43...♖e7! 44 h4 g6 45 ♖fe5 g5 46 hxc5 hxc5 47 fxc5 ♖xc5

White has managed to reduce the number of pawns, but what matters more is that his fortress has been demolished and the bishops are

becoming especially dangerous. The decisive manoeuvre ...♖e7-d6 is threatened.

48 b4 ♖xd3+!

A transformation of the advantage.

49 ♖xd3 ♖e7?!

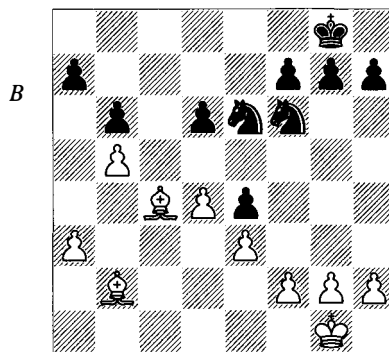
49...♖d8! retains excellent winning prospects.

50 b5 ♖d6 51 a5 ♖xg3 52 ♖b4+ ♖c5 53 ♖c6 a6 54 ♖d3 ♖f2 55 ♖a7 axb5 56 a6 b4 57 ♖b5?

57 ♖c8! draws if followed up precisely.

57...♖b6 58 a7 ♖b7 59 ♖d6+ ♖xa7 60 ♖xf5 b3 61 ♖d6 ♖b6 62 ♖c4+ ♖b5 0-1

But in closed endgame positions, the advantage of the bishop-pair may also prove decisive, particularly if the knights have no outpost squares in the centre.



Botvinnik – Furman
Training match (game 2), Moscow 1961

25...d5 26 ♖a2

"In such a position, it is useful to keep the bishops at a certain distance from the knights." (Botvinnik).

26...♖f8

An attempt to reduce the pawns by exchanging on the queenside would come to grief: 26...♖c7 27 a4 a6? 28 a5! ♖d7 29 bxa6.

27 a4 ♖e7 28 ♖a3+ ♖d7 29 f3!

Opening a road for the king and creating new points of conflict.

29...♖c7 30 ♖f8 g6?!

Black should of course have repeated moves with 30...♖e6, although in the end this would probably have had no decisive bearing on the outcome of the fight.

31 ♖f2 ♖e6 32 ♖g3 ♖d7 33 ♖h6

Threatening 34 fxe4.

33...f5

Not 33...a6? 34 ♖f4.

34 ♖f4 ♜e8 35 fxe4 fxe4 36 ♖h4 ♜d6?!

36...♜f6 37 ♖g6 ♜g8 looks fairly miserable for Black, but does present White with the problem of how he is going to break through, and 38 h4 is met by 38...♜f8, making ...h6+ a possibility.

37 ♖xd6!

The simplest solution.

37...♖xd6 38 ♖g5 ♖e6 39 h3 ♜f6 40 ♖h6 ♜h5

Or 40...♜f7 41 g4.

41 ♖b3

White avoids the uncomplicated trap 41 ♖xh7 ♜f4.

41...♜g3

Not 41...♜f4? 42 exf4 e3 43 ♖d1.

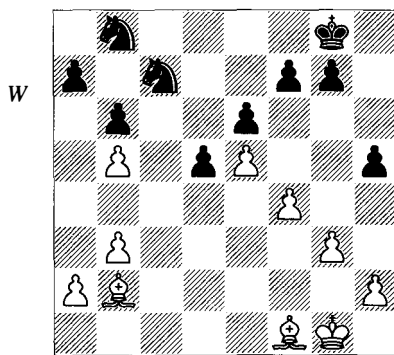
42 ♖xh7 ♖f5

Or 42...♜f1 43 ♖xg6 ♜xe3 44 g4! and Black loses.

43 ♖xd5 g5

Hoping for 44...♜f1.

44 ♖g7 g4 45 hxg4+ ♖xg4 46 ♖e6+ 1-0



Pytel – Kostro

Polish Ch, Gdynia 1973

From Black's viewpoint, this position might seem a little easier, as he has an extra 'half-pawn'. Yet the trouble is the same as before – the knights have no outposts in the centre, and, most importantly, there are no prospects of creating any.

26 ♖d4 ♜d7 27 b4 g6

27...f6 28 a4 ♖f7 29 ♖e2 g6 30 h3 is similarly dismal for Black.

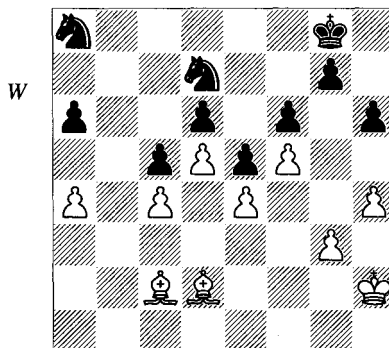
28 a4 ♖f8 29 ♖d3 ♖g8 30 ♖g2 ♖h7 31 h3! ♖g8 32 g4 hxg4 33 hxg4 ♖g7 34 ♖f2 ♖h6 35 ♖e3 ♜a8 36 ♖c3 ♜c7 37 ♖d4 ♖g7 38 ♖e1 ♖f8 39 ♖h4 ♜a8 40 f5 gxf5 41 gxf5 ♖g7

The lesser evil was 41...♖e8 42 fxe6! fxe6 43 ♖g6+ ♖f8 44 ♖d8 ♜b8 45 ♖e3 ♜d7 46 ♖f4 ♜b8 47 ♖h5 ♜d7 48 ♖g5 d4! 49 ♖f4!.

42 ♖e7! ♖h6 43 ♖e2 ♖g7 44 ♖g4 ♜f8 45 ♖f6+ ♖g8 46 ♖e7 ♜c7 47 ♖d6 ♜e8 48 ♖b8 ♜d7 49 ♖xa7 ♜c7 50 fxe6 fxe6 51 ♖e2 ♖f7 52 a5 1-0

After 52...♜a8 53 axb6 ♜axb6 54 ♖xb6 ♜xb6 55 ♖c5 the outcome is obvious.

Under certain circumstances, the advantage of the bishops may be decisive even in a heavily blocked position.



Züger – Schiffer
West Germany 1979

The decisive factor, in addition to the advantage of the bishop-pair, is White's spatial plus, which makes the black knights completely helpless to act. An important role, as the actual course of events will show, is played by the weakness of Black's pawn on a6. Taking all this into account, it isn't difficult to devise a plan for exploiting White's advantage. According to the principle of two weaknesses, the threat to penetrate with the king on the kingside and the attack on the a6-pawn on the queenside ought to break down Black's defence.

1 ♖h3 ♖h7 2 ♖g4 g6

Passive defence also fails to save Black: 2...♜c7 3 ♖h5 ♜f8 4 a5 ♖g8 5 ♖a4 ♖f7 6 ♖c6 ♖g8 7 ♖b7 ♖f7 8 ♖c8 ♖g8 (Black's king can't permit itself to head towards the queenside on account of the sacrifice 9 ♖xh6) 9 g4

♙f7 10 g5 hxg5 11 hxg5 g6+ 12 ♖h6 gxf5 13 ♙xf5 fxg5 14 ♙xg5, and White wins.

3 fxg6+ ♙xg6 4 a5 ♖c7 5 ♙f3 ♖f8 6 g4 ♖h7 7 ♙a4 ♖f8

An attempt to construct a fortress by means of a piece sacrifice is interesting but unsuccessful: 7...♖g5+!? 8 hxg5 hxg5 9 ♙d7 ♙f7 10 ♙c8 ♙e7 11 ♙e2 ♙d8 12 ♙b7 ♙d7 13 ♙d3 ♙d8 14 ♙c2 ♙d7 15 ♙b3 ♙d8 16 ♙a4 ♙d7 17 ♙xa6 ♖xa6 18 ♙b5 and White wins.

8 ♙e3 ♖h7 9 ♙d7 ♙g7 10 ♙c8 ♙g6

There is no salvation in other lines either. For instance, 10...♖f8 11 g5! hxg5 12 hxg5 ♖h7 13 ♙g4 ♖xg5 14 ♙xg5 fxg5 15 ♙xg5 ♙f7 16 ♙f5 ♙g7 (or 16...♙e7 17 ♙g6 ♙d8 18 ♙b7 ♙e7 19 ♙c6 ♙f8 20 ♙f6, with zugzwang) 17 ♙xa6! ♖xa6 18 ♙e6 ♙f8 19 ♙xd6 ♙e8 20 ♙c6 ♙d8 21 ♙b7.

11 ♙xc5 ♖xd5

Or 11...dxc5 12 d6 ♖e6 13 ♙xe6 ♖f8 14 ♙f5+! ♙f7 15 g5 hxg5 16 hxg5 fxg5 17 ♙g4 ♙f6 18 d7 ♙e7 19 ♙xg5 ♖xd7 20 ♙xd7 ♙xd7 21 ♙f5.

12 cxd5 dxc5 13 ♙xa6 ♖f8 14 ♙b5 1-0

Methods of Combating the Two Bishops in the Endgame

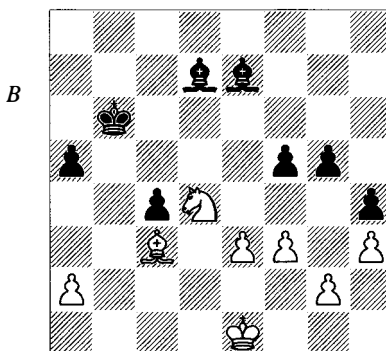
We have seen that the advantage of two bishops in the ending can be sufficient in itself to win the game. Nonetheless, the defender needs to know how to conduct the defence even in positions like this. To that end he has to be familiar with the characteristic strategic devices and methods of combat.

Aside from tactical possibilities (like stalemate, a knight fork, etc.) there are two main strategic methods of defence – namely, reducing the number of pawns and constructing a fortress.

Reducing the Number of Pawns

Reducing the pawns is one of the fundamental strategic precepts for defence in the endgame, but against the advantage of the bishop-pair it is by no means always a magic wand that will save you. As already pointed out, with the pawn exchanges and the emptying of the board, the bishops acquire more scope and the value of the

‘minor exchange’ increases accordingly. This is nonetheless a means of defence that the defending side should not neglect.



Milov – Van Wely
Biel 2000

Despite Black's obvious plus, it isn't easy to suggest a concrete way for him to exploit his advantage or even improve his position. The main reason for this is White's powerful knight bastion in the centre, allowing him to construct a fortress which Black can only breach at a considerable cost in pawn exchanges.

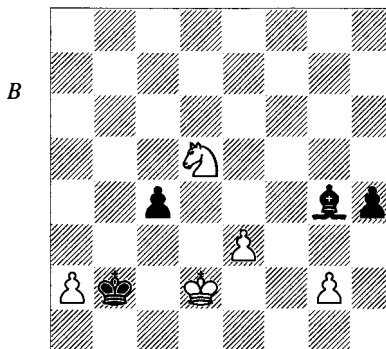
47...g4

Black can avoid exchanging pawns by playing 47...♙b4 48 ♙d2 ♙c5 49 ♙c2, but it isn't clear what he is to do after that.

48 hxg4 fxg4 49 fxg4 ♙xg4 50 ♙xa5+! ♙xa5 51 ♖c6+ ♙a4 52 ♖xe7 ♙a3 53 ♙d2 ♙b2

After the immediate 53...♙f3, White defends in a more conventional manner: 54 ♙c3 ♙xg2 55 ♖f5 h3 56 ♙xc4.

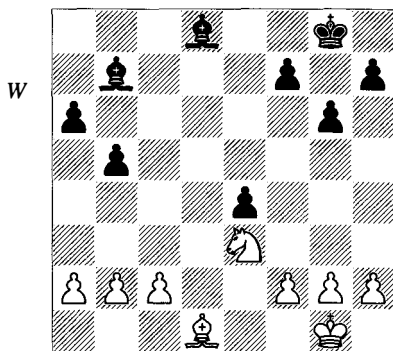
54 ♖d5 (D)



54...♙f3!

The last chance. The continuation 54...♙f5 55 ♖c3 ♙d3 56 e4 ♙f1 57 ♖d1+! (but not 57 e5? ♙xg2 58 e6 h3) 57...♙xa2 58 ♖c3! ♙xg2 59 ♖f2 leads to a draw.

55 gxf3 h3 56 ♖c3! h2 57 ♖d1+ ♙xa2 58 ♖f2 ♙b2 59 ♖d1+ ♙b3 60 ♖f2 ♙b2 ½-½



Arnason – Kasparov
World Junior Ch, Dortmund 1980

The position looks (and most likely is) strategically won for Black. This is due to the advantage of the bishop-pair, the asymmetrical pawns, the openness of the struggle and the possibility of very quickly centralizing the black king. Yet by no means everything is as simple in practice as it is on paper, even for players in the top category.

29 c3 ♙g7?!

Already Kasparov's actions start to show a certain illogicality. Why not 29...f5 (a move Black can't do without anyway), when the king reaches the centre more quickly via f7?

30 a4!

White initiates the plan of pawn exchanges.

30...bxa4 31 ♙xa4 f5 32 g3 ♙f6 33 h4?!

Reasonably enough, White arranges his pawns in a chain, anticipating that Black's efforts to create a passed pawn on the kingside will lead to further pawn exchanges.

33...♙c8 34 ♙d1 h6?!

Pursuing too direct a strategy without envisaging the subsequent events. *In most endgames where time is not a critical factor, the right strategy for the stronger side is: activate your pieces to the full, restrict the scope of your opponent's pieces, dislocate his defences as far as you can, and only afterwards advance your*

pawns. On this reasoning, 34...♙e5 is technically more correct.

35 ♙e2 a5 36 ♙b5 ♙e5 37 ♖c4+ ♙d5 38 ♖e3+ ♙c5?!

Still the same straightforward play. Black should go back to square one and prepare ...f4, but in a manner that retains the rest of the kingside pawns.

39 ♙e8! g5 40 hxg5 hxg5 41 ♙g6! f4 42 gxf4 gxf4 43 ♖g2!

At this point the direct strategy of reducing pawns with 43 b4+? would be mistaken in view of 43...axb4 44 cxb4+ ♙d4, when the immense activity of Black's pieces (the two bishops are a great force here) would make White's position barely defensible in spite of the minimal quantity of pawns remaining.

43...♙c4!

From this moment on, when White is as close to the draw as he can get, Kasparov starts to play his characteristic active chess, constantly setting his opponent new problems.

44 ♖g2f4

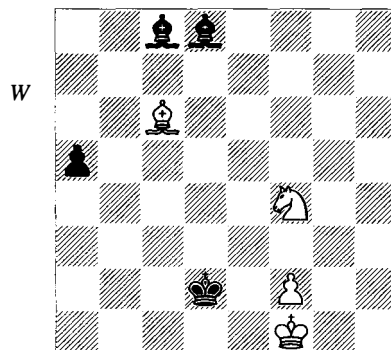
Holding the endgame after 44 ♙f7+ ♙d3 45 ♖xf4+ ♙c2 46 b3 ♙xc3 would be far from easy.

44...♙b3 45 ♙xe4 ♙xb2

Now all White needs to do to reach the draw is a mere trifle: to give up his knight, or even his bishop, for Black's last pawn. But Black's advantage of the bishop-pair means that this task is not so simple.

46 ♙c6 ♙xc3 47 ♙f1 ♙d2! (D)

A well-known ploy of elbowing the opponent aside: the white king isn't allowed to approach the enemy passed pawn.



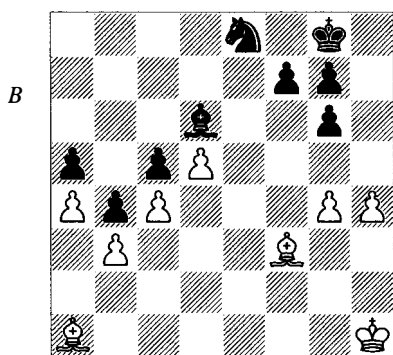
Exercise 42: What would you play if you had White here?

(For the answer, see page 98.)

Constructing a Fortress

The foregoing example clearly demonstrates that against the advantage of two bishops in the endgame, the method of defence by pawn exchanges – though resting on a definite positional basis – by no means always works.

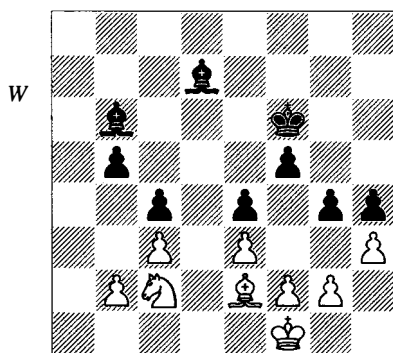
The technical device known as ‘constructing a fortress’ can often be far more effective.



Gelfand – Seirawan
Tilburg 1990

Exercise 43: What would you play in Black’s place?

(For the answer, see page 98.)

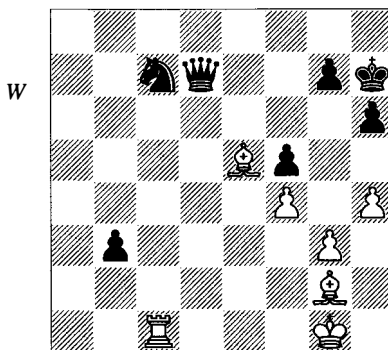


VI. Sergeev – Abramović
Bela Crkva 1990

Exercise 44: Suggest a plan of action for White.

(For the answer, see page 99.)

Examples of constructing a fortress in the endgame are met with frequently. Here is another one.



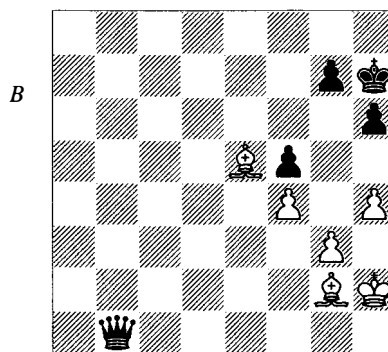
Sveshnikov – Psakhis
Zonal tournament, Erevan 1982

It looks as if the passed pawn on b3 is going to cost White a piece, leaving him with a rook against a queen. Should he resign, then?

Not in the least! As chess-players jokingly say, no one ever saved so much as half a point by resigning a game.

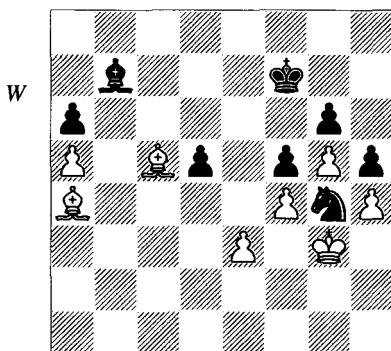
The point is that White can head for another type of ending – one with two bishops against the queen – where the bishops will defend their fortress most staunchly and successfully.

62 ♖xc7! ♜xc7 63 ♙xc7 b2 64 ♚h2 b1 ♜65 ♙e5 (D)



The two bishops, so to speak, have cut the board in half. The black king can’t penetrate the enemy camp via the queenside and will be shut out of g4 by the white king stationing itself on h3 at the requisite moment. Nor can Black achieve his aim by the pawn-break ...g5. White can exchange twice on g5 and withdraw his bishop to f4 – or else, as happened in the game, he can just take on g5 with the h-pawn and then calmly wait for the ...g4 advance. The game ended in a draw on the 88th move.

Yet even against the technical device of fortress-building, the active side has counter-measures. The chief of these is zugzwang.



Larsen – Sarapu

Interzonal tournament, Sousse 1967

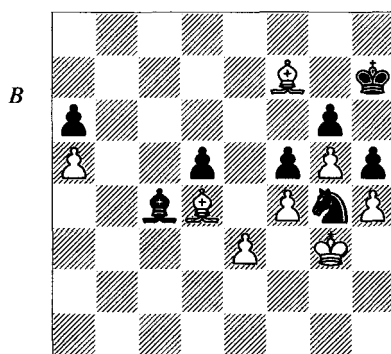
Playing for zugzwang means restricting the activities of all your opponent's pieces as far as you can.

In the diagram position the knight is already under arrest. The black king is hampered by the need to guard the g6-pawn. There only remains the bishop on b7, but it too can take few steps in freedom.

53 ♖d7 ♜g7 54 ♜e8! ♜a8 55 ♜d4+ ♜h7 56 ♜f7 ♜b7 57 ♜e6 ♜c6 58 ♜c8 ♜b5 59 ♜b7 ♜c4 60 ♜c6 ♜g8

The only move. Not 60...♜b3? on account of 61 ♜b5!.

61 ♜e8 ♜h7 62 ♜f7 (D)



White is already threatening 63 e4! fxe4 64 f5 gxf5 65 g6+, and this forces Black to make material concessions.

62...♜d3 63 ♜xd5 ♜e4 64 ♜c4 ♜b7 65 ♜e6

The forcing line 65 e4 fxe4 66 f5 is good, since the apparently troublesome 66...e3 loses simply to 67 f6. But the position after the text-move can also be assessed as completely won for White.

65...♜e4 66 ♜c8 ♜d3 67 ♜b7 ♜g8 68 ♜d5+ ♜f8 69 ♜c5+ ♜g7

There is no essential difference between this and 69...♜e8; the black king is tied to the defence of g6 anyway. Now White brings his last reserve – his king – into the fray, and although this lets the knight out of its prison, we know that the king in the endgame is worth more.

70 ♜f3 ♜h2+ 71 ♜f2 ♜e4 72 ♜c4 ♜b7 73 ♜b4 ♜h7 74 ♜c3 ♜g4+ 75 ♜e2 ♜h2 76 e4!

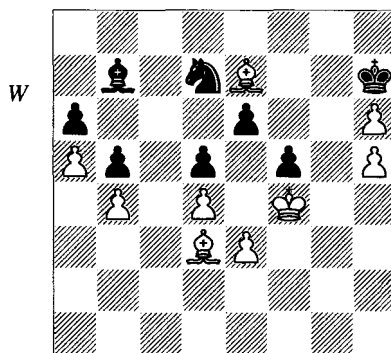
The time has come!

76...♜xe4

Or 76...fxe4 77 f5 gxf5 78 ♜f7.

77 ♜xa6 ♜f3 78 ♜c8 ♜xh4 79 a6 ♜g2 80 ♜e5 h4 81 ♜b7 h3 82 ♜xe4 fxe4 83 a7 1-0

Another method of fighting against a fortress involves sacrifices to 'dynamite' it.



Chiburdanidze – A. Marić

Belgrade (women) 1996

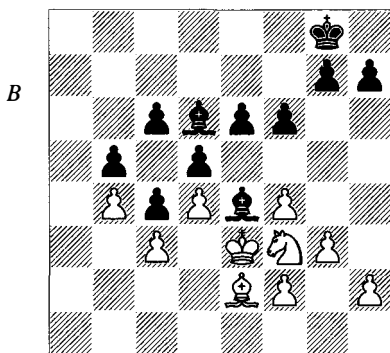
Exercise 45: In White's place, what would you play?

(For the answer, see page 99.)

Transformation of the Advantage

One method of exploiting the advantage of the two bishops is by transforming it – in particular,

by a timely exchange of one or both bishops in return for other material or positional assets. Chess-players have some reason for saying that an extra benefit of the two bishops is that you can always exchange one of them advantageously.



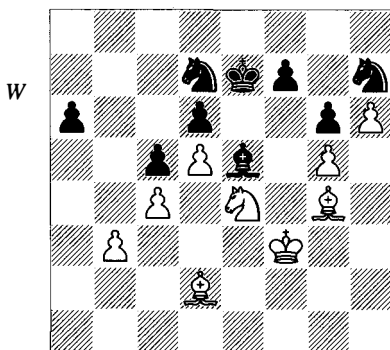
Kovačević – Ribli
Bugojno 1984

26...xf3!

The simplest way to exploit the extra pawn here. Black voluntarily renounces the advantage of the bishop-pair, but obtains two connected passed pawns in an opposite-bishop endgame.

27 xf3 f7 28 g4 e7 29 h4 h6 30 h5 e5! 31 fxe5 fxe5 32 f4 exd4+ 33 exd4 d8 34 e6 c7 35 f7 e7 36 e8 b6! 0-1

After 37 e3 f6 38 d2 c5 39 bxc5+ xc5, Black creates two connected passed pawns by ...b4 or ...d4, and this settles the outcome of the fight.

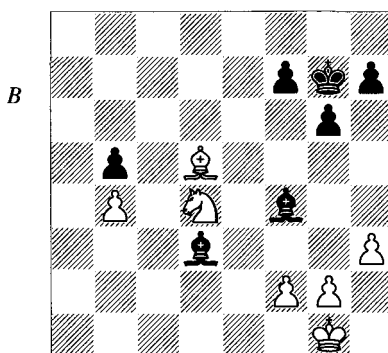


Dzhindzhikhashvili – Dementiev
Kaliningrad 1972

White achieved the win by forcing means:

51 xd7! xd7 52 f4! xf4 53 xf4 e7 54 f6! xf6 55 gxf6+ xf6 56 b4! cxb4 57 e3! b3 58 d2 1-0

But of course you shouldn't by any means always relinquish the advantage of the two bishops by exchanging them at the first opportunity and thereby trading your superiority 'for a mess of pottage'. As a rule, before this transformation takes place, the player with the advantage seeks to improve his position to the maximum.



Vize – Yudovich Jr
Varna 1978

White threatens e6; after an exchange of queenside pawns, a drawn result would be assured.

Hence there followed:

1...e5! 2 c6 c3 3 a7

Reckoning on 3...xb4?! 4 e6.

3...d4 4 c6 b6 5 g3?

In his search for counterplay, White could have continued 5 e5?! e2 6 xf7 c7 (threatening 7...c4) 7 g5 d6 8 e6+ f6 9 c5 e5, although even then, despite the pawn minus, Black would have quite good winning chances thanks to his bishop-pair and centralized king. 5 xf7! is a safer way to make use of the same tactic, as 5...e4 6 e8 f8 7 d7 gives Black nothing concrete, while the pawn-down ending after 5...xf7 6 e5+ e6 7 xd3 d5 8 f1 is no more than a comfortable draw for Black.

5...f6 6 g2 f8 7 a5 e7 8 b3 c4

The transformation of the advantage. As yet there was no hurry for it, seeing that Black

could have continued improving his position by 8...♖d6 9 ♜b7 f5!.

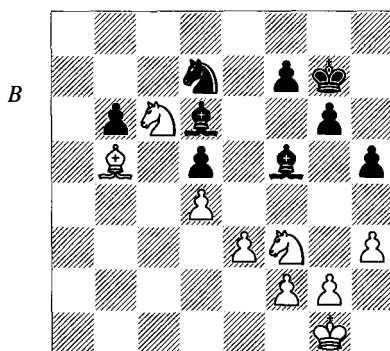
9 ♜xc4 bxc4 10 ♖a1 ♖d6 11 ♜f3 ♖d5 12 ♜c2 c3 13 ♜e2 ♖c4 14 f3 ♜a7 15 g4 g5! 16 b5 ♜c5 17 ♖a1 ♖xb5 18 ♖d3 ♖b4 19 ♜c2+ ♖b3 20 ♖a1+ ♖b2 21 ♜c2 ♜b6 22 ♖b4 ♜c7 23 ♜c2 ♜e5 24 ♜e3

Now the black king's penetration on the kingside will finally break White's defence.

24...♜c1! 25 ♜c2

Or 25 ♜e2 ♜f4.

25...♜d1 26 ♜e3+ ♜e1 27 ♜c2+ ♜f2 28 ♜e4 ♜e2 29 ♜e3 ♜d6 30 ♜c2 ♜d2 0-1



Estevez – Karpov

Interzonal tournament, Leningrad 1973

Clearly if Black is to count on victory, he needs to get his passed b-pawn moving. But this has to be preceded by some complex and painstaking preparatory work.

35...♜f6

Intending after 36...♜e4 to bring the knight to c3.

36 ♜d2 ♜e8!

We now see that ousting the blockading bishop is something that the black knight can also do from c7.

37 f3 ♜c7 38 ♜e2 ♜c2

Thwarting White's possible counterplay: 39 e4 ♜f4!.

39 ♜f2 ♜a4 40 ♜e5 b5!

Off we go!

41 ♜d3?

Weak prophylactic thinking by White. In view of Black's next move, White needed to play 41 g4!.

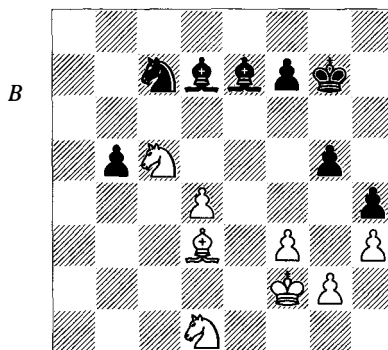
41...h4! 42 ♜b2?!

When facing the two bishops in an ending, it is imperative to strive for counterplay. Planless, passive defence is equivalent to death. For this reason 42 e4! followed by ♜e3 is correct.

42...♜b4 43 ♜b1 ♜b3

An amusing picture: the white knights are completely hobbled.

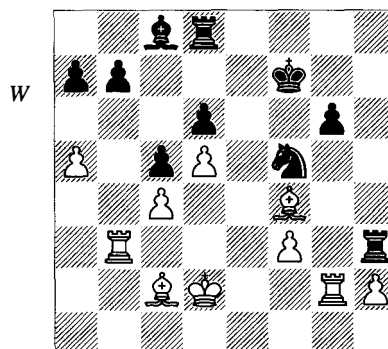
44 ♜d3 ♜c4 45 e4 g5 46 exd5 ♜xd5 47 ♜d1 ♜c6 48 ♜bc3 ♜d7 49 ♜e4 ♜e7 50 ♜c5? (D)



After this mistake Black wins a pawn by exchanging pieces on c5. An oversight in a difficult position tends to be natural rather than fortuitous.

50...♜xc5! 51 dxc5 ♜e6 52 ♜c3 b4 53 ♜e4 b3 54 ♜d2 ♜xc5 55 ♜b1 ♜f6 0-1

A subsequent raid on c3 or g3 by the black king settles everything.



Boleslavsky – Balendo

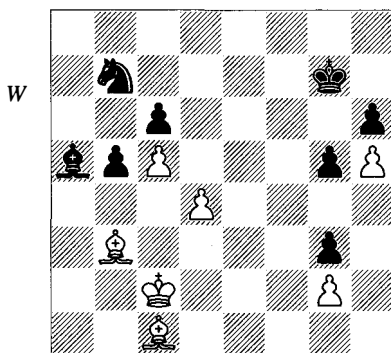
Minsk 1971

Exercise 46: How would you continue for White?

(For the answer, see page 100.)

The Passed Pawn

The presence of a passed pawn in the endgame is an essential factor both for exploiting an advantage and for creating counterplay. Endings with two bishops are no exception to this general principle.



Karpov – Seirawan
Brussels 1986

Black's extra pawn, which anyway is doubled, plays no significant role. Clearly White must create a passed pawn if he is to have any chance of realizing his advantage.

54 d5! ♖xc5 55 ♠b2+ ♜f8 56 dxc6 ♖a6

56...♗e8? is met by 57 ♠g7.

57 ♠a3+ ♗e8

Not 57...♠b4? 58 c7!.

58 ♠e6 ♠b4 59 ♠b2 ♜f8?

After 59...♜f8? 60 ♠c8! ♖c7 61 ♠e5 ♠a5 62 ♠xg3 White recovers his pawn while keeping all the advantages of his position.

Black had to play 59...♠d6!, when he is safe in lines like 60 ♠g7 ♗e7 61 ♠d7 (61 ♠f5?! ♖b4+ 62 ♗b3 ♖xc6) 61...♖b8 62 ♠xh6 ♖xd7 63 cxd7 ♗xd7 64 ♠xg5 (or 64 ♠g7 ♗e6 65 h6 ♗f7) 64...♗e6.

60 ♠d7+ ♗d8 61 ♠e5 ♖b4+ 62 ♗d2 ♖d5 63 ♠e6 ♖c7 64 ♠f7

It's zugzwang. One variation is 64...♖a6 65 ♠e6 ♖c7 66 ♠f5 ♖a6 67 ♗d1 ♖c7 68 ♠f6+ ♗e8 69 ♠g6#.

64...♖e8 65 ♠xe8!

Transforming the advantage.

65...♗xe8 66 ♠f6!

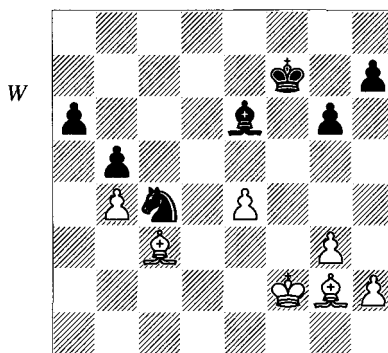
The result is that the actions of Black's pieces are totally paralysed.

66...g4 67 ♗c3 ♠d6 68 ♠g7 ♠f4 69 ♗b4 ♗d8 70 ♗xb5 ♗c7 71 ♗c5 ♠e3+ 72 ♗d5 ♠f4 73 ♠f8

White could also win with 73 ♠e5+ ♠xe5 74 ♗xe5 followed by heading for h6.

73...♗b6 74 ♠d6 ♠g5 75 ♠xg3 1-0

"On account of their long range, bishops are excellent for supporting a passed pawn. Another key point is that they can control all the squares in the pawn's path. The player on the weaker side has great difficulty defending against the pawn's advance; the only chance is to blockade it on a square controlled by his own bishop, but the blockade is usually lifted with the aid of zugzwang." (Alexander Panchenko).



Portisch – Groszspeter
Hungarian Ch, Budapest 1981

43 ♗f3! g5 44 ♗e2 ♠d7 45 ♗d3 ♗e6 46 h4!

Opening up the full amount of space for the bishops. An attempt by Black to cross White's plan would only increase his own problems: 46...g4? 47 h5!, and additional objects of attack arise, namely the pawns on g4 and h7.

46...g4 47 g4 ♗d6 48 ♗d4 ♠g4 49 ♠e1 h5 50 e5+ ♗e6 51 ♠d5+ ♗f5

Or 51...♗e7 52 ♠b7.

52 ♠g3 ♖d2 53 ♠g8! ♠d1 54 e6 ♗f6 55 ♠e5+ ♗e7 56 ♠f4 ♖c4 57 ♠g5+ ♗f8 58 e7+ ♗e8 59 ♠h7 ♖d6 60 ♗e5 ♗d7 61 ♗f6 ♠b3 62 ♗g7 ♗e8 63 ♗f6 ♗d7 64 ♠g6

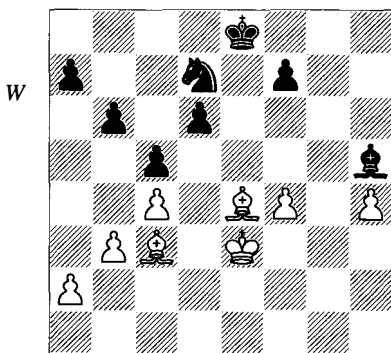
Threatening 65 ♠g7.

64...♖e8+ 65 ♗e5 ♠d1 66 ♠f5+ ♗c6 67 ♠e3 ♠f3 68 ♠c5 ♠e2

If 68...a5? then 69 ♠g6 ♗d7 70 bxa5.

69 ♗f4 ♠c4 70 ♠g6 ♗d7 71 ♗g5 1-0

An *outside* passed pawn is an advantage in many types of endgame. Endings with the bishop-pair are no exception to this either. And naturally, the further the passed pawn is from the centre, the harder it is for the weaker side to defend.



Taimanov – Smyslov
USSR Ch, Tbilisi 1966

In this position, the principle of two weaknesses will suggest to us White's strategy for exploiting his advantage: the threat to attack Black's weaknesses on the queenside will help to clear the path for the passed h-pawn.

42 f5!

Seizing some space. The hasty 42 f3? is of course a mistake: 42... xf3 43 xf3 f5! with an obvious draw.

42... e5 43 f6 g6 44 e1 f8 45 g3 d7 46 f5+ e6 47 h3 d1 48 f4!

Preparing to bring this bishop to e7, where it will tie down the opponent's pieces still further.

48... h5 49 h6 d1?!

Not even trying to hinder White's plans with 49... e8 .

50 f8 h5 51 e7 a5

The attempt to create counterplay is practically forced. Against passive defence, White would decide the game by bringing his king to g3, followed by g4 and the victorious advance of the outside passed h-pawn.

52 f2 d1 53 g3 a4 54 bxa4 xa4 55 h5

The outside passed pawn's first step is taken.

55... c2 56 h6 g6 57 g4

Threatening 58 h5 .

57... h7 58 f2

Now an invasion by the white king on the queenside should destroy Black's defence.

58... b1 59 c3 h7 60 d2 b1 61 c3 e4 62 b3 d5

Alas, there is nothing else.

63 cxd5 xd5+ 64 c3 e4 65 c4 e8

A trap. After the straightforward 66 b5? d4+ 67 xb6 c4 , Black would obtain distinct counter-chances.

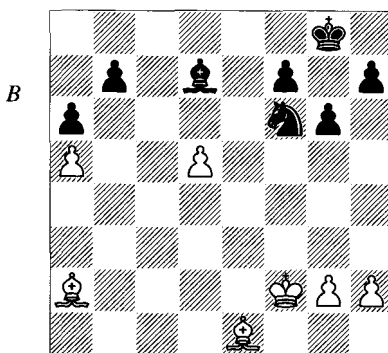
66 f3! b5+ 67 c3

Not 67 xb5?? d4+ and 68... xf3 .

67... g5 68 h7! 1-0

The Bishop-Pair in the Endgame – How Much is it Worth?

Everything in life has its value. So it is in chess – the two bishops in an ending are a boon, a plus. But how much is this endgame advantage worth? A pawn? More, less? The question of course is an abstract one. It all depends on the specific position.

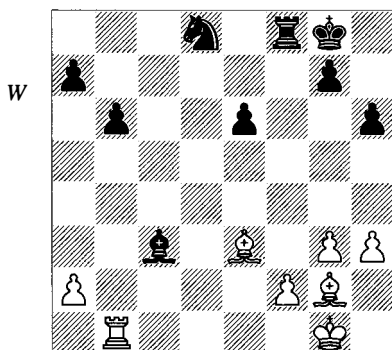


Donner – Velimirović
Capablanca Memorial, Havana 1971

Exercise 47: What would you play in Black's place?

(For the answer, see page 100.)

In the following position White evidently has good compensation for a pawn: the advantage of the bishop-pair, Black's extra pawn-island, and the greater activity of the white pieces (the black knight on d8 is particularly 'noteworthy').



Lobron – Korchnoi
Hamburg 1998

22 ♖d1!

At this point, considering that Black has a difficult defence ahead of him, it was worth thinking about paying the price of the extra pawn in order to neutralize White's initiative by exchanges: after 22...♗f7!? 23 ♖d7 ♗e5 24 ♖xa7 ♗c4 25 ♖b7 (25 ♖f4 g5 and ...♙d4) 25...♗xe3 26 fxe3, the opposite bishops should ensure Black a fairly simple draw following 26...♖a8 27 ♖xb6 ♖xa2 28 ♖xe6, while 26...♙d2! even raises the question of who is the one seeking to hold a draw.

But Viktor Korchnoi would not be Viktor Korchnoi if he parted with his material so lightly.

22...♙f6!? 23 ♙e4! ♖f7

After 23...g5 24 ♙g6 ♗f7 25 ♖d7 ♗e5 26 ♙h7+ ♗h8 27 ♖xa7 ♗c4 28 ♙e4 ♗xe3 29 fxe3 ♖d8, an opposite-bishop ending again arises, but this time in a version less favourable to Black.

24 ♙g6 ♖b7 25 ♙f4

An alternative is 25 ♖c1 ♗f8 26 ♖c8 ♗e7.

25...♗f7 26 ♖c1 ♖d7 27 ♖c8+ ♙d8 28 ♖a8?!

How many times have I come across examples of an assured, well thought-out and stubborn defence proving more effective than the attack? Not the least important role here is played by questions of psychology.

Yes, defending is difficult and unpleasant. It often means accommodating your actions to the will of your opponent over a long period, and being ready to make concessions while waiting for your hour to come (and then not missing it!), when you can go over from grim defence to a counter-attack.

And yet holding the initiative and attacking can be no less difficult. Imagine the situation. We have been conducting an offensive consistently, inventively and single-mindedly. One move, three moves, five, ten ... our attack continues. For ages, sitting at the board, we have been involuntarily rubbing our sweaty palms against our trousers in the expectation that our opponent will stop the clock at last, and the traditional handshake will take place. Yet he does *not* resign (such impudence!). Another move, five moves, ten moves... Furthermore, our opponent keeps on and on setting us fresh problems. In such situations the attacker often fails to understand what is ultimately happening in the game and completely loses his patience and his hold on events. Then the advice to give him is that there may come a time to acknowledge that the onslaught has not succeeded and he should be thinking about ways to hold his own position.

Up to this point in the game nothing has happened to frighten White, but from now on the assessment of the position starts to shift in Black's favour. Instead of decentralizing his rook, White should perhaps have considered a line such as the following (based on Korchnoi's analysis): 28 ♗g2!? e5 29 ♙e3 (29 ♙c1 ♖c7) 29...♗d6 30 ♖a8 (30 ♖c6 ♗b5!, followed by repetition with 31...♖c7 32 ♙e6 ♖e7) 30...♗c4 31 ♙c1 ♗f8 (31...♖d1 32 ♙h5! ♖xc1 33 ♖xd8+ ♗h7 34 ♖e8 leaves White with a minimal plus) 32 ♙c2 b5 33 ♖b8 a6 34 ♖a8 ♖d6 35 ♖a7, with compensation for the pawn.

28...♗f8 29 ♙c2

Here too, White should have preferred 29 ♗g2!? ♗e7 30 ♙c1 ♗f6 31 ♙c2 ♙e7 32 ♙b2+ e5, followed by ...♙c5-d4 with approximate equality.

29...g5 30 ♙b8?!

It doesn't take a grandmaster's insight to call attention to the absurdity of the placing of White's rook and the bishop on b8. Of course he had to play 30 ♙e3.

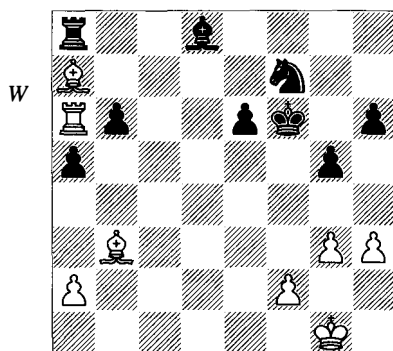
30...a5 31 ♙a4 ♖d2 32 ♙b3

Seeing that the situation was turning in his opponent's favour, White had to look for a way to redirect the course of the fight – for instance by sacrificing another pawn. After 32 ♖a7!? ♖xa2 33 ♙b3 ♖a1+ 34 ♗g2 ♖e1 35 ♖b7, White has distinct compensation for the lost material.

32...♖e7 33 ♠c4 ♜f6 34 ♜a6?

This really is too much – going into such contortions with your own pieces! White should of course play 34 g4! followed by ♠g3, retaining drawing chances – thanks first and foremost to the two bishops.

34...♜c2 35 ♠b3 ♜c8 36 ♠a7 ♜a8 (D)



The situation that has come about deserves a diagram. If we weren't familiar with the preceding course of events, we would be hard put to imagine how such a position could arise in a game between two well-known grandmasters. It rather bears the stamp of a beginners' game.

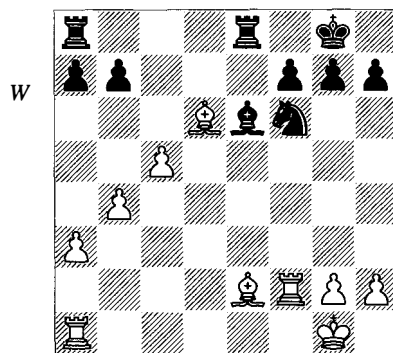
The remaining moves were:

37 ♠a4 ♜e5 38 ♠b5

After 38 f4 gxf4 39 gxf4 ♜d3 40 ♠c6 ♜b4 41 ♠xa8 ♜xa6 followed by ...♠c7, the bishop on a7 would be locked up for life.

38...♜f5 39 ♜g2 ♜e4 40 ♠e2 ♜d5 41 a4 ♜c6 42 ♠b5 ♜b4 0-1

But the power of the bishop-pair in the ending is not always priced in terms of a pawn.



G. Siegel – Stefanova
Recklinghausen 1998

It's clear that White stands better, but Black doesn't seem to be faced with anything terrible. She threatens to equalize with ...♜e4. On 21 ♠f3, she neutralizes the advantage of the bishop-pair with 21...♠d5.

To Black's surprise, however, there followed:

21 ♜xf6 gxf6 22 ♠f3

Despite the exchange minus, the white bishops step forward in all their splendour.

22...♠c8

Giving back extra material goes so much against the grain! Anyway, it isn't clear how this can be done conveniently. Black simply can't bear to give up the b7-pawn and leave White with an extremely dangerous passed c-pawn.

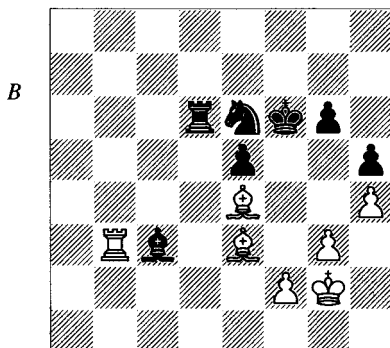
23 ♜d1 a6 24 ♜f2 ♜g7 25 ♠f4 ♜a7 26 ♠b8 ♜a8 27 ♠c7 ♜e7 28 ♠d6 ♜e8 29 h4 ♜a7 30 ♠b8 ♜a8 31 ♠c7 ♜e7 32 ♠d6 ♜e8 33 h5 h6 34 ♜d4 ♜d8 35 ♠e4 ♜a7 36 ♜d3 ♜e8 37 ♠f3 ♠f5 38 ♜d4 ♠c2 39 ♠c7 ♜e7 40 ♠d8 ♜e5 41 ♠d6 ♜f8 42 ♠xf6 ♜e8 43 ♠d4 ♠e4 44 c6 ♠xf3 45 gxf3 ♜a8 46 cxb7 ♜ab8 47 ♠xb6 ♠xb7 48 ♠f6! 1-0

The 'Best Odds' Principle

Anyone who knows how to play bridge should be familiar with the principle of the maximum odds. Its point is that the optimum result is attained not by the most plausible continuation but by an arithmetical comparison of all the possibilities.

Suppose that the declarer has worked out his plan for playing the hand, and finds (as often happens in bridge) that it will leave him one trick short. Let us say there are three possibilities for gaining this trick: finessing a king (a 50% chance of success); playing for a 3-3 split (when the declarer's side holds seven cards in a particular suit; we'll say this gives theoretically a 30% chance); or finessing the third queen (20%). The experienced bridge player will begin by trying out the last two options, which have the odds against them, but can be tried without risking anything. It is only if they fail that he will throw his best weapon – the king finesse – into the fray. If it works, he is victorious. If not – oh well, it was just not to be!

However strange it may seem, this kind of situation sometimes arises in chess too.



Karpov – Ljubojević
Montreal 1979

To begin our examination of this ending, we shall naturally evaluate it. White has the advantage of the bishop-pair, and there is an extra pawn-island on the black side. Yet these are all the advantages White has. Surely they cannot be enough to win the game or even offer any *chances* of playing to win it? After all, Black too has his trumps (albeit defensive ones). There are very few pawns left. The field of play is virtually limited to one half of the board, which means that in strength a knight is not far short of a long-range enemy bishop. And – most importantly – an endgame win is usually achieved by creating a passed pawn, yet in the present case this is practically out of the question, given the severe reduction of the pawn material.

Consequently White's last chance for a win rests on the advantage of the bishop-pair, flexible manoeuvring, and ... the principle of the 'best odds'.

Let us follow what Karpov does in this 'hopelessly drawn' ending.

41...♙d4

The sealed move. The alternatives 41...♙a1 and 41...♙a5 make no significant difference, since the question of tempo is not critical for the time being.

I would ask you to take note of the present position. Running ahead, I shall say that we are going to come back to it more than once.

42 ♙h6

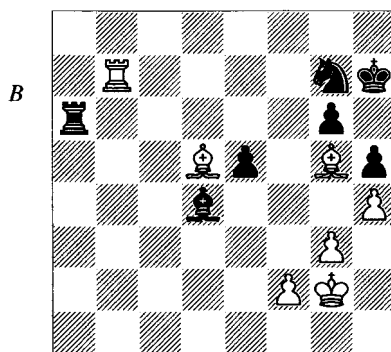
An attempt to shake Black's defence with an attack by white pieces from the rear.

42...♘g7 43 ♙g5+ ♚f7 44 ♖b7+

44 ♖f3+ ♘f5 45 ♙xf5 gxf5 46 ♖xf5+ ♙g6 47 ♖f8 e4! 48 ♖e8 ♚f5 only leads to a draw.

44...♙g8 45 ♙e7 ♖a6 46 ♙d5+ ♚h7 47 ♙g5 (D)

If 47 ♙f8 then 47...♖a7.



47...♖d6 48 ♙e4 ♙g8 49 ♖b8+

Hoping for 49...♚h7? 50 ♖f8, just on the off chance (a probability of, say, 10%).

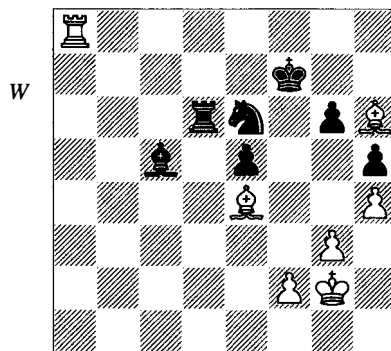
49...♚f7! 50 ♖c8 ♘e6 51 ♙h6 ♙c5!

Threatening to exchange rooks by 52...♖d8 53 ♖c6 ♖d6, with an inevitable draw.

52 ♖a8 ♖d8 53 ♖a5 ♖d6 54 ♙b1

A second try. Karpov is attempting to re-group his offensive forces by bringing this bishop to the a2-g8 diagonal.

54...♙d4 55 ♖a8 ♙c5 56 ♙a2 ♚f6 57 ♖c8 ♙d4 58 ♖e8 ♖a6 59 ♙c4 ♖c6 60 ♙d3 ♚f7 61 ♖a8 ♖d6 62 ♙e4 ♙c5 (D)



We have returned again (with insignificant changes) to the position we started from. This last attempt (stationing the bishop on the a2-g8 diagonal) has again failed to give the desired results. Let us seek other chances.

63 ♙f1

Why not have a try at bringing the white king into the fight?

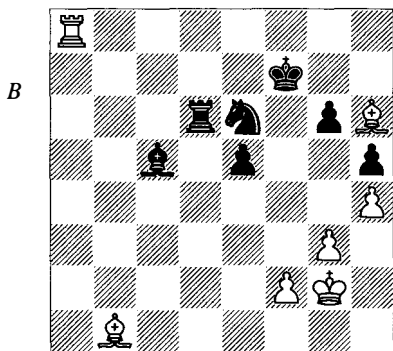
63...♖d1+ 64 ♙g2 ♖d6

This try too, an extremely simple one (with no more than a 1% chance of success), has naturally led to nothing. On the other hand it has not spoilt anything either.

I am convinced that this position must have appeared on the board repeatedly during the adjournment analysis. In addition, I am sure Karpov understood that those previous winning attempts, very naïve in places, were scarcely going to induce an error from his opponent. But...

Karpov will have noted his optimum chance – his ‘king finesse’ – in advance. He brings it into action only at the last moment.

65 ♖b1! (D)



On the face of it, Black has no cause for alarm. ‘We’ve been through this before.’

65...♗d4

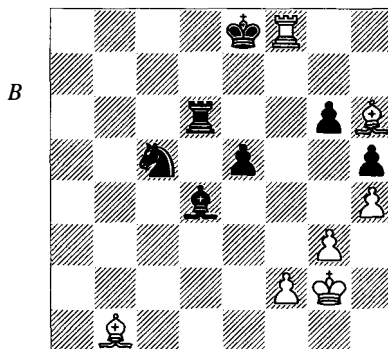
An attempt at counter-attack with 65...♗b6 66 ♗a2 ♗b2 costs Black the exchange after 67 ♗a6 ♗xf2+ 68 ♖h3 ♗xa2 69 ♗xa2, when he has an exceedingly difficult endgame to defend. But

anyway, what is all this for? We have been sleeping so sweetly!

66 ♗a3! ♗c7 67 ♗a2+ ♖e8 68 ♗f3 ♗e6 69 ♗b1!

The picture of the battle has unexpectedly changed. The position has become sharp and tactical. White keeps on creating new threats, and Black already has to play with extreme accuracy to parry them.

69...♗c5 70 ♗f8+ (D)



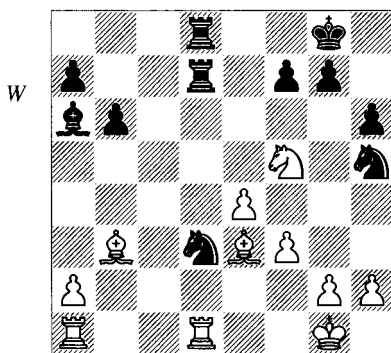
Exercise 48: Given Black’s limited choice between 70...♖e7 and 70...♖d7, which move would you choose?

(For the answer, see page 101.)

We have concluded our examination of that very important theme of chess strategy, the ‘advantage of the bishop-pair’. I hope this will help you to find your bearings in many middlegame positions. Questions of the confrontation between bishop and knight are a perennial problem in chess.

Answers to Exercises for Chapter 3

Exercise 27



The main thorn in White's flesh is the knight on d3. Fighting against it directly is a very laborious business. But there is another way – incapacitating it, knocking away the support from under its feet, in other words depriving the knight of the c5-square, which was its last secure station.

26 ♖a4!!

“Moves like this are often more difficult to find than forced combinations many moves deep. But their effect is just as powerful as that of many a sacrifice.” (Alexander Kotov)

26...b5

On 26...♞c7 White plays 27 ♞d2 and 28 ♞ad1.

27 ♖b3 ♜hf4

White intends to step up the pressure on the d3-knight, after which cutting off its support by ♖d5 will force Black backwards.

28 ♞d2 ♜e6 29 ♞ad1 b4 30 ♖d5!

In Black's camp there has been a sounding of the retreat for some time now. But there is nowhere to retreat to!

30...♜dc5 31 ♜d4!

Threatening both 32 ♜c6 and 32 ♜xe6 fxe6 33 ♖xe6+.

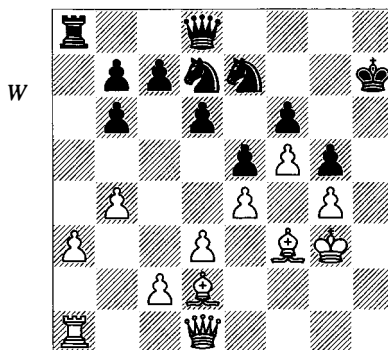
31...♜xd4 32 ♞xd4 ♞b8 33 ♞b1 ♜d3 34 ♞b3 ♞c7?

This blunder merely hastens the fitting conclusion of the game.

35 ♞bx d3 ♖xd3 36 ♖f4! 1-0

(Now return to page 53.)

Exercise 28



W

The main strategic factors are:

- White's spatial plus;
- the open h-file, which looks more likely to be seized by White than by Black;
- if White succeeds in gaining control of the open file, the black king may come under a very strong attack, something which the white king evidently does not have to fear;
- White has two bishops, which may become extremely dangerous if the position opens up. But even opening the game is not obligatory. The successful transfer of a bishop to a strategically important diagonal may decide everything quickly. Prospects for the black knights are not even to be dreamt of.

Once the main strategic elements have been defined, playing the white side is easy, just as if the opponent had placed his cards on the table.

28 ♞c1 ♞g8 29 ♞b2 ♜g7 30 ♞h1 ♜f8

The king endeavours to flee from the dangerous sector. But Black's chief misfortune is the lack of coordination between his pieces. To the end of the game he will not succeed in remedying this, on account of his restricted space.

31 c3 ♜e8 32 ♖d1

Transferring this bishop to the a2-g8 diagonal, where its activity dramatically increases.

32...♜f8

An attempt by the king to flee further is also unsuccessful: 32...♜d8 33 ♖b3 ♞g7 34 ♖e3 c6 35 ♖e6.

33 ♖b3 ♞g7 34 ♖c1 c6 35 ♞h5

Domination of the open h-file is secured for White; an important point is that when the invasion takes place, the rook will be in front of the queen.

35...♖d8 36 ♖f2 ♘c8 37 ♙e3 b5 38 ♗h2 b6?

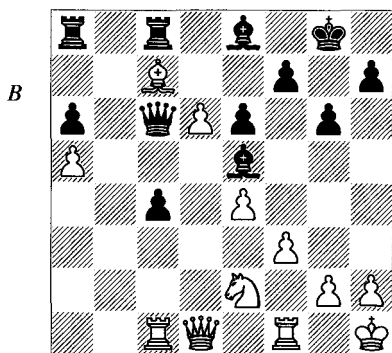
When defending, pointless unforced pawn moves are especially foolish.

39 ♙e6 ♘e7 40 ♙xb6 ♘xe6 41 fxe6 ♘g6 42 ♙h7 ♗g8 43 ♗h5! 1-0

The continuation 43...♖b8 44 ♙h8! ♗xh8 45 ♗xg6+ leads to mate.

(Now return to page 54.)

Exercise 29



Black's position might seem difficult, were it not for...

24...♖xc7! 25 dxc7 ♗xc7

Well then... The dark-squared bishop and the queen are already attacking White's king position. Black's light-squared bishop has acquired freedom. The passed pawn on c4 will be supported from the rear by the major pieces. And all this has merely cost the exchange. But here again, let us try to state some useful generalizations.

In open positions where the knight has no outposts in the centre, the strength of two bishops and a pawn is no less (and tends to be greater) than that of a rook and knight.

From this it is clear that the diagram position must be recognized as favouring Black.

26 ♗c2 ♖c8 27 f4

Or 27 g3 h5.

27...♙d6 28 ♗c3 ♙b5 29 e5

Weakening the a8-h1 diagonal – but it isn't easy to recommend anything else, since the knight and rook are defending the f4-pawn while the queen guards the a5-pawn. That is to say that nearly all the white pieces are tied to defensive duties.

29...♙c5 30 ♘g3 ♙c6!

Of course Black must not allow the knight onto e4. But White can't exploit this circumstance to return the exchange, since 31 ♗xc4 would be met not by 31...♙b5 with a probable draw, but by 31...♙e3!. Then in view of the threatened 32...♙xg2+, it would be an immense task for White to secure a peaceful outcome. After 32 ♘e4 ♙xc1 33 ♖xc1 ♗xa5, he is simply left a pawn down.

31 ♖fe1 ♗b7 32 ♗c2 ♙b4 33 ♖e2 ♙d5 34 ♘e4 ♙xe4 35 ♗xe4

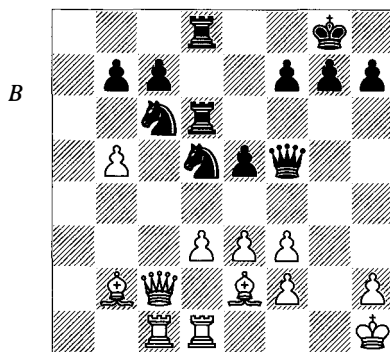
Black was preparing to answer 35 ♖xe4 with 35...♙d2. Then after 36 ♖xc4 (if 36 ♖b1, then 36...♗d5 followed by ...c3) 36...♖xc4 37 ♗xc4 ♙xc1 38 ♗xc1 ♗b4!, White loses a pawn.

35...♗d5 36 ♗c2 ♖d8 37 h3 ♗c5 0-1

White overstepped the time-limit, but he no longer has a satisfactory defence, seeing that 38 ♗xc4? fails to 38...♖d1+.

(Now return to page 56.)

Exercise 30



The situation is worrying for White, what with the tremendous activity of the black pieces, the weakened position of the white king and the apparent total inactivity of his 'loyal subjects'. All these considerations led to Black deciding it was time for decisive measures:

25...♙d4!

After the less forceful 25...♘ce7?!, the fairest verdict is that the position is at best (from Black's viewpoint) equal or probably somewhat better for White. So our verdict on the objective assessment of the position can only be made once we have analysed Black's more aggressive options.

26 exd4

Perhaps it is more testing to play 26 ♖xd4. Then 26...exd4? 27 e4 ♖e5 (the only continuation given by Piket in his notes to the game) 28 exd5 ♜h6 is inadequate because after 29 ♖xc7! ♜xh2+ 30 ♖g1, it is White who wins, not Black! However, Black does have a solution, namely the immediate 26...♜h6! 27 ♜g1 (forced) 27...exd4, when 28 e4? now loses to 28...♖h3. White can try desperately to hang on with 28 ♖c5, but Black has a substantial advantage.

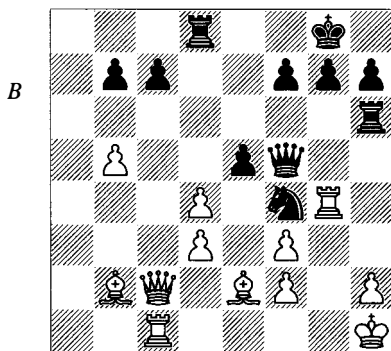
Given that the reply to either capture on d4 is ...♜h6, one may ask if Black could not invert his move-order, and play 25...♜h6!?, keeping the ...♞d4 idea in reserve. Indeed he can, since 26 bxc6? gets White mated after 26...♞f4!? 27 exf4 ♖h3. As 26 ♖f1? fails to 26...♞d4!, White has nothing better than 26 ♜g1, when 26...♖h3? 27 ♜g2 ♞d4 28 exd4 is bad for Black, so it is high time for 26...♞d4, when play can transpose to the 25...♞d4 lines, although Black's delay in sacrificing has given White a grim additional defence of 27 ♖d1 – Black is much better, but White is not instantly losing. Thus Black's actual choice of 25...♞d4! is the most forcing, and best.

26...♜h6

Threatening ...♖h3.

27 ♜g1 ♞f4 28 ♜g4 (D)

Nor can he save himself with 28 ♜g3 ♖h5 29 ♖g1 (29 h3 ♖xh3+!? 30 ♜xh3 ♜xh3+ 31 ♖g1 ♜d6) 29...♖xh2+ 30 ♖f1 ♖h1+ 31 ♜g1 ♖xg1+! 32 ♖xg1 ♜dd6 and Black mates.

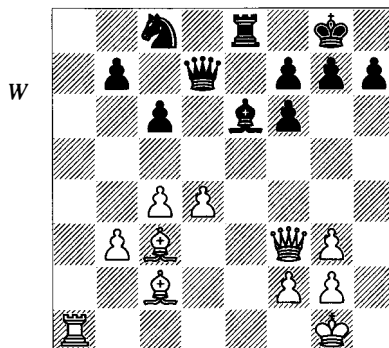


28...♖h5 29 h4 ♖xh4+! 30 ♜xh4 ♜xh4+ 31 ♖g1 ♜d6 0-1

The knight on f4 looks like a commander proudly surveying the victorious actions of his troops.

(Now return to page 60.)

Exercise 31



White's advantage in this position rests principally on two strategic elements: his possession of the centre and the bishop-pair.

Short opts for a strategy of enhancing the role of his dark-squared bishop (which has no opposite number).

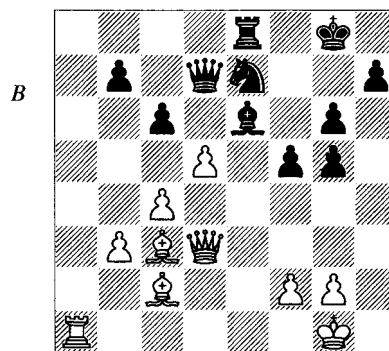
20 ♖d3! f5

On 20...g6 White intended 21 d5! cxd5 (21...♖f5 is also met by 22 ♖d4) 22 ♖d4! ♖d8 23 cxd5 ♖xd5 24 ♜d1 ♜e5 25 f4 ♜h5 26 g4, winning.

21 g4! ♞e7 22 ♖b4! g6 23 ♖c3!

The aim is achieved! The dark squares, primarily the a1-h8 diagonal, are irreparably weakened. Black has no remedy for these defects of his position.

23...f6 24 g5! fxg5 25 d5! (D)



White has been exceptionally consistent in pursuing his strategy. With a few moves recalling feints in football he has cleared the a1-h8 diagonal, and now the way to the opponent's goal is open. Zilber tries to complicate White's task by sacrificing a piece, but all this does is somewhat prolong the struggle.

25...♟xd5 26 cxd5 ♖xd5 27 ♖e3 f4 28 ♖b6 c5 29 ♖e1 ♖c6 30 ♖xc6 bxc6 31 ♟f6 g4 32 ♟g5 f3 33 gxf3 gxf3 34 ♖e3 ♟f7 35 ♖xe8+ ♟xe8 36 ♟e7

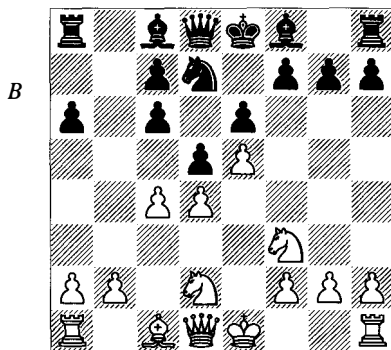
By now of course it was high time to end the fight, but evidently out of inertia Black played on:

36...♟f7 37 ♟xc5 ♟d5 38 ♟h2 ♟g7 39 ♟g3 ♟f6 40 ♟d4+ ♟g5 41 b4 h5 42 ♟e3+ ♟f6 43 ♟h4 ♟f7 44 ♟d4+ ♟e7 45 ♟e4 ♟e8 46 ♟xf3 ♟d6 47 ♟g5 ♟e6 48 ♟e4 ♟d6 49 f4 1-0

And only now, at last, Black remembered that a player may finish a game with the words 'I resign'.

(Now return to page 60.)

Exercise 32



8...dxc4!

The strategy is familiar to us – to demonstrate the strength of his light-squared bishop (traditionally the hopelessly 'bad' one in the French Defence), Black applies the device of 'diagonal clearance'.

9 ♖a4?!

Permitting Black to fulfil his strategic aims. It is better to play 9 ♟xc4, although after the reply 9...♟b6 or 9...a5 White would already be the one with opening problems to solve.

9...♟b6! 10 ♖xc6+ ♟d7 11 ♖e4 ♟b5!

Unexpectedly the light-squared bishop starts behaving aggressively.

12 ♟b1

Of course 12 0-0?! is no good for White on account of the obvious 12...c3.

12...♖d5!

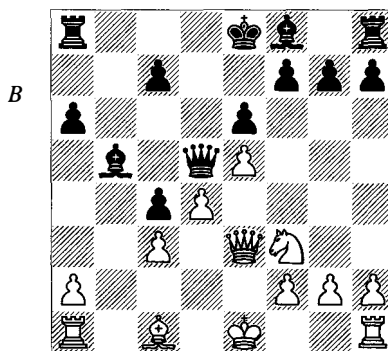
We have here an example of the successful application of one other strategic device –

'exchange speculation' (which we have come across before). White is faced with an unpleasant choice: either to exchange queens (thereby bringing the game closer to an ending, which the knight fears so much), in highly unfavourable conditions too – or else to concede to the black queen the very convenient aggressive bridgehead on d5.

13 ♖e3

If White plays 13 ♖xd5 ♟xd5 14 ♟c3, then either 14...♟c6 or 14...♟xc3 15 bxc3 ♟c6.

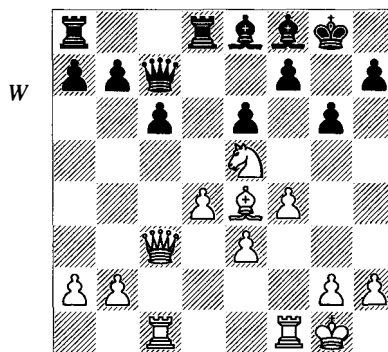
13...♟a4! 14 ♟c3 ♟xc3 15 bxc3 (D)



Additional Exercise 32A: Choose between these four candidate moves: 15...c5, 15...♟e7, 15...♟c6 and 15...♖b8 – and give the reasons for your decision.

(For the answer, see page 101.)

Exercise 33



With White's all-powerful knight on e5 and his considerable space advantage, the verdict on the position is easy to understand. White is better. The only question is where to develop his initiative – on the queenside or the kingside?

Opting for the queenside, of course, is less dangerous for the white king. And yet it is precisely in this case (after White carries out the plan of a pawn attack with b4, a4 and b5) that the black bishops will be able to participate in the game.

Not by chance, Muratov rightly gives preference to the alternative plan:

19 g4! h6?

Now White smashes through unopposed. The ugly-looking but necessary 19...g6 makes things more difficult.

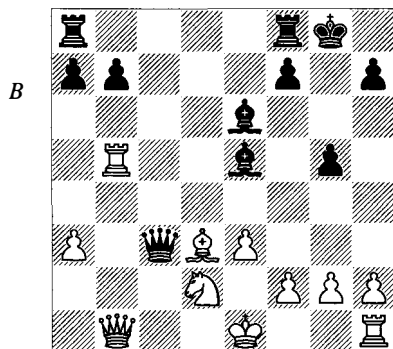
20 f5 exf5 21 gxf5 g5 22 f6!

The b1-h7 diagonal decides everything.

22...♙d6 23 ♙b1 ♖f8 24 ♖c2 ♙xe5 25 dxe5 1-0

(Now return to page 63.)

Exercise 34



You would have to be an incorrigible pessimist not to believe in outright victory for Black. The main reason for this is White's *catastrophic backwardness in development*.

19...♜f8

19...♜ad8!? is even better – see the next note.

20 ♖e2 ♙f5 21 e4?!

21 ♙xf5?! ♜xd2+ (21...♜xd2+? 22 ♖f3) 22 ♖f3 (22 ♖f1? ♜c4+) 22...♜c6+ gives Black a decisive attack. The unlikely-looking 21 ♙e4 ♙xe4 22 ♙xe4 ♜d2+ 23 ♖f3 is perhaps the most resilient defence, although Black retains a large advantage of course. With Black's rook on f8 instead of a8 (see the note to Black's 19th move), this would lose on the spot to 23...f5!.

21...♙f4 22 ♜d1 ♙e6 23 g3 ♙a2! 24 ♜b3

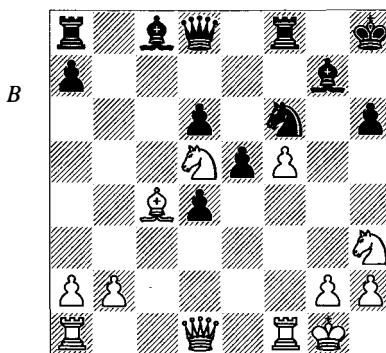
Or 24 ♜c2 ♜xc2 25 ♙xc2 ♙xd2 26 ♜xd2 ♙c4+.

24...♜xb3 25 ♙xb3 ♙xb1

And Black converted his advantage into a win with no trouble.

(Now return to page 63.)

Exercise 35



“Black’s positional plus is indisputable even though the struggle remains quite complex. This type of position requires a precise, concrete line of play aimed at exposing the defects of the opponent’s set-up as quickly as possible. At this point it doesn’t look a bad idea to play 18...♙xd5 19 ♙xd5 ♜b8, or 18...♜b8 at once, but there is a more energetic continuation at Black’s disposal.” (Kasparov).

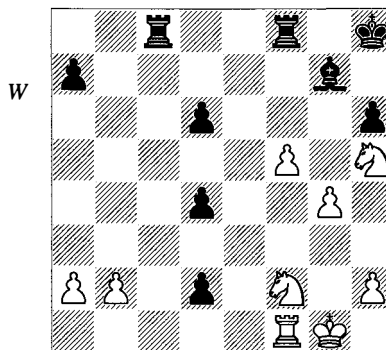
18...♙a6! 19 ♙xf6

If 19 ♙xa6 then 19...♙xd5 and 20...♙e3.

19...♙xc4 20 ♙h5 ♙xf1 21 ♜g4 ♜d7 22 ♜xf1 d3!

The start of the victorious offensive.

23 ♜f3 d2 24 g4 ♜ac8 25 ♜d3 ♜a4 26 ♙f2 ♜d4! 27 ♜xd4 exd4 (D)



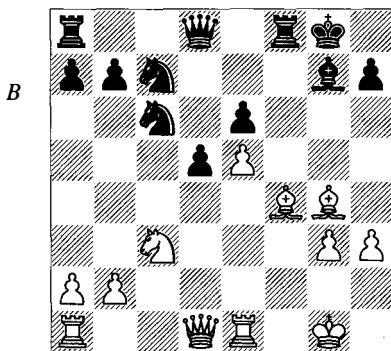
With the queens exchanged, the black king’s insecure position is no longer dangerous. “Outwardly the tripled pawns are not a pretty sight, but this is just the sort of case where the strength

of the pawns depends on how far advanced they are. The pawn on d2 is still playing the chief role.” (Kasparov).

28 ♖f4 ♜fe8 29 ♖e6 ♜c1 30 ♖d1 ♙f6 31 ♙f2 ♙g5 32 ♙e2 ♜c5 33 ♙d3 ♜e5 34 ♖xg5 hxg5 35 ♜f2 ♜e4 36 h3 ♜e3+ 37 ♙xd4 ♜8e4+ 38 ♙d5 ♜e2 39 ♜f3 ♜e1 40 f6 ♜f4 0-1

(Now return to page 64.)

Exercise 36



“In the middlegame you should push a central passed pawn without any hesitation.” (Bronstein).

18...d4! 19 ♖a4 d3! 20 ♙g2

Neither 20 ♖c5? ♜d4+ (but not 20...♜xf4? 21 ♖xe6!) nor 20 ♜c1? ♜xf4! 21 gxf4 d2 is acceptable.

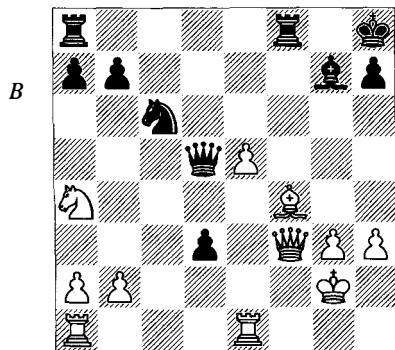
20...♖d5!?

20...♜d4 is also promising.

21 ♙xe6+?!

21 ♜e4 is a better try.

21...♙h8 22 ♙xd5 ♜xd5+ 23 ♜f3 (D)



23...♜b5

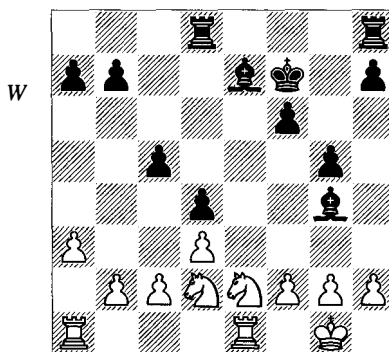
Not the straightforward 23...♜xf3+? 24 ♙xf3 ♖d4+ 25 ♙e4 ♖c2 26 ♙xd3, which can at best

(from Black’s viewpoint) be evaluated as ‘unclear’.

24 ♜e4 ♜ad8 25 b3 ♜d4 26 ♜e3 d2 27 ♜ed1 ♜d5+ 28 ♙h2 ♖xe5 29 ♙xe5 ♜xe5 30 ♜xe5 ♙xe5 0-1

(Now return to page 64.)

Exercise 37



The evaluation of the position is of course gloomy for White. An endgame has almost been reached. Hence the two bishops are considerably stronger than the two knights.

But in chess, as is well known, there is a big difference between ‘worse’ and ‘lost’.

In positions where knights are contending with bishops, the only chance is to build an effective defence by creating outposts for the knights.

Therefore the most acceptable defensive plan here consists in seizing and fortifying the c4-square as a knight outpost – by 20 a4! followed by ♖c4. Nor is it difficult to decide what to do afterwards with the other knight – it will be brought to d2, for instance along the route e2-c1-b3-d2.

In the game, however, White adopted a different plan:

20 ♖g3

This move isn’t bad in itself, but it is the start of a sequence of unthinking, planless moves by White.

20...h5!

This, as already noted, is the most effective way to restrict the knights – with the rook’s pawns. However, if at this moment White had grasped the strategic issues correctly, he could have found a solution to his problem, though not quite the same as the one mentioned before:

21 h3! ♔d7 22 a4! h4 23 ♖gfl, followed by ♜c4 and ♜fd2.

21 f3?! ♔d7 22 ♜e2?!

It was still not too late to play 22 a4, albeit in less favourable conditions than earlier.

22...b5?!

A consistent move, but showing an insufficient sense of danger and foresight. White's sole trump in this position is his possession of the open e-file, which Black ought to neutralize by exchanging a pair of rooks. It therefore looks more natural to continue 22...h4!? 23 ♜ael ♜he8 24 ♜ge4 ♔f8, followed by preparing the advance ...f5.

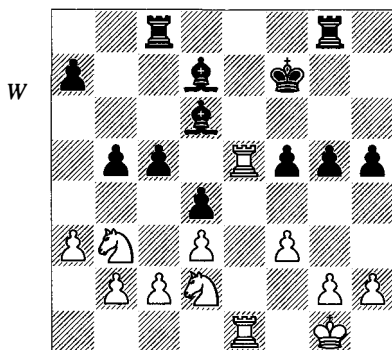
White's position, of course, is not easy. But a strong player, when defending, needs to know not only how to fight and hold on in difficult positions, but also how to look for a way out even when the situation is hopeless.

A question arises, however: *how can you save a hopeless position if your opponent isn't going to make any mistakes?* There is just one way. Constantly, at every step, set him tasks, confront him with problems. In that way, *force* him to doubt his own powers and commit errors! In view of this, the technique for exploiting an advantage is a technique not for winning quickly but for letting your opponent set you as few questions as possible in what remains of the struggle.

23 ♜ael ♔f8 24 ♜ge4 ♜g8

Preparing the advance ...f5.

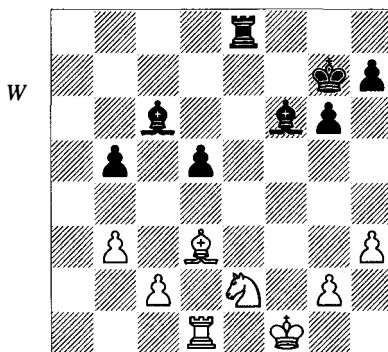
25 ♜b3 ♜c8 26 ♜ed2 ♔d6 27 ♜e4 ♔f8 28 ♜ed2 f5 29 ♜e5 ♔d6 (D)



Additional Exercise 37A: White has little choice. Choose between the candidate moves 30 ♜5e2 and 30 ♜d5.

(For the answer, see page 102.)

Exercise 38



The main thing is to decide on a position for the knight. The ideal place is in the centre. The most suitable continuation is therefore 42 c3 and 43 b4, securing the knight an excellent post on d4.

However, White allotted a different destiny to this piece.

42 ♜g1?! g5 43 ♜f3 h5!

Using the wing pawns to confine the knight.

44 ♔e2?

White carries on conducting a planless defence, forfeiting any control over events.

44...♜e4! 45 ♔d3 ♜f4! 46 ♜e2 g4 47 hxg4 hxg4 48 ♜h2 g3 49 ♜f3 d4 50 ♜f1 b4 51 ♜d2!

At last White shows some concern for active defence. Against a passive waiting strategy, Black would continue strengthening his position by bringing his king to the centre and his bishop to e3.

51...♜h4 52 ♜f3?!

White still doesn't sense the danger. Otherwise he would have looked for ways to change the direction of the struggle. This could have been done by 52 ♜f3! ♔xf3+ (there is no point in declining the sacrifice; after 52...♔e5 53 ♜f5 ♔b8 54 ♜f3 ♜h2 55 ♜f1 the fortress is set up all the same, but at no material cost) 53 ♜xf3 ♔e5 54 ♔e4, followed by bringing the king to d3. It would then be extremely hard, if possible at all, for Black to breach the fortress.

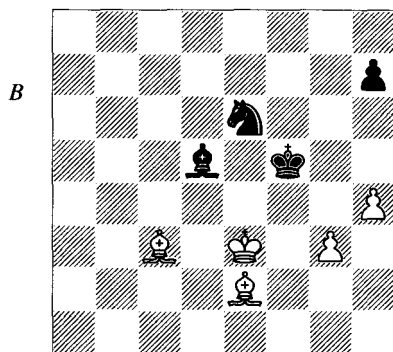
52...♜h8 53 ♜d2?

A blunder, albeit in a difficult position. 53 ♜a1 is preferable.

53...♜h2! 54 ♜xh2 gxh2 55 ♜h1 ♔e5 56 ♔f1 ♔e4! 57 ♜d1 ♜f6 58 ♜d2 ♜g5 59 ♜d1 ♜g4 0-1

(Now return to page 72.)

Exercise 39



Defending positions like this is reminiscent of the job of a bomb-disposal expert: any false move may be your last. Making the right choice in the present situation is not simple. Over the board, the correct decision may be suggested by a process of elimination. The point is that if there are several candidate moves but nearly all the lines lead to clear defeat, while just one of them offers some light at the end of the tunnel, then this is the one to go for. If it doesn't help, and we lose – well, hard luck! The decisive mistakes must have been made at an earlier stage. In exactly the same way, of course, a process of elimination may be applied to positions where we are looking for a path to victory.

So let us take the moves in turn:

1...g6? 2 d3+ h6 3 g4 b3 4 f3 d5+ 5 g3 b3 6 f6 and White wins.

1...b3? leads to a similar finale: 2 g4+ g6 3 d3+ h6 4 f3.

1...f8! (the most stubborn continuation) 2 g4+ g6 3 d3+ f7!. Although even here, after 4 g5 or 4 h5, Black would have to conduct a most difficult defence, there would still be chances of salvation.

In the game Black missed the point, and played:

1...h6?

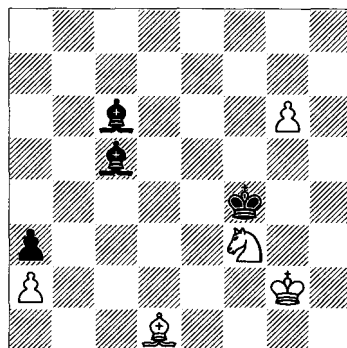
Additional Exercise 39A: What did Black miss?

(For the answer, see page 104.)

Exercise 40

When playing an endgame, you need to remember the clear-cut standard positions. The plausible 46...d4? is a mistake, allowing White to unpin his knight with 47 f1!. The

B



point is that 47...xf3 48 fxf3 fxf3 49 e1, followed by bringing the king to b1, gives a theoretically drawn position.

46...d5! 47 f1

White also loses with 47 g7 xa2 48 e1 d5+! 49 f3 g8 50 d3+ e3. His strongest line at this point is 47 h2! xa2 48 d2 (threatening b3) 48...g8 49 b3 a2 50 xa2 xa2. While this still allows Black a theoretical win, it would demand a good deal of effort.

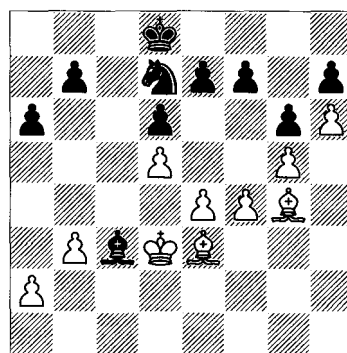
47...xa2 48 e1 c4+ 49 e2 a2 50 c2 b3 51 a1 d5 52 d1 d4 53 b3 xb3 54 xb3 e4 55 e2 d5 56 d3 g7 57 c2 c4 0-1

After 58 a5+ b4 59 b3 a3 White succumbs to zugzwang.

(Now return to page 73.)

Exercise 41

B



A typical situation in play (or in chess psychology). Up to here, Black's task, though a defensive one, has demanded no special effort or energy. Perhaps he has subconsciously satisfied himself that nothing dangerous is in store and that his opponent is only playing on out of spite. However, in such a frame of mind it isn't easy

to force yourself to wake up when concrete threats make their appearance in the game.

So it is here. Black hasn't realized that White's main threat consists in a pawn attack with e5. That being so, 15...♗b2 is the correct move. It does not of course guarantee Black a draw, but it is better than the game continuation.

15...♗a5? 16 ♖d4! ♕e1 17 e5! dxe5

If 17...♗h4 then 18 e6.

18 fxe5 e6

Or 18...♗h4 19 e6 fxe6 20 dxe6.

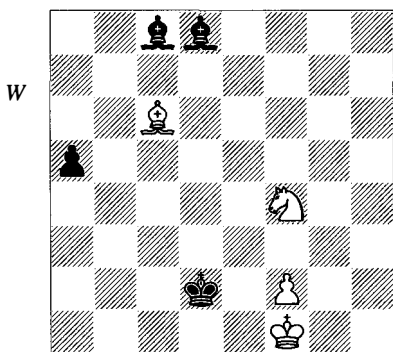
19 dxe6 fxe6 20 ♖xe6 ♗h4 21 ♖d5

The advantage of the bishops is manifest. If 21...♗c7, then 22 e6 breaks down Black's defence.

21...b6 22 b4! ♖xg5 23 e6 ♖f6 24 ♖xb6+ ♗e8 25 ♖c4 ♖xh6 26 a4 ♖f8 27 b5 axb5 28 ♖xb5+ ♗e7 29 ♖c5+ ♗xe6 30 ♖xf8 ♖d7 31 ♖b4 h5 32 a5 h4 33 ♗e2 g5 34 a6 ♖b6 35 ♖c6 1-0

(Now return to page 76.)

Exercise 42



The correct solution is to centralize the knight quickly and prepare counterplay based on the advance of the passed f-pawn. 48 ♖d5! gives White more than realistic chances of salvation: 48...♖a6+ 49 ♗g2 ♖c4 50 f4 or 48...♖f5 49 ♖e3.

Not sensing the critical moment, however, White replied...

48 ♖b5?! ♖f5

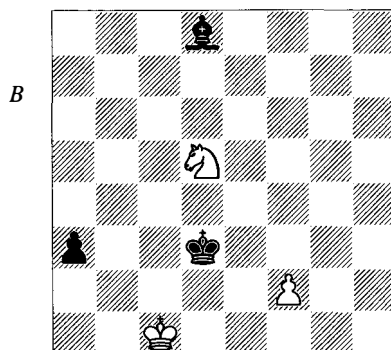
...and only then played...

49 ♖d5?

Right now this move is actually the decisive mistake.

49...♖d3+!! 50 ♖xd3 ♗xd3 51 ♗e1 a4 52 ♗d1 a3 53 ♗c1 (D)

Or 53 ♖b4+ ♗c3 54 ♖a2+ ♗b2 55 ♖b4 ♖e7.



53...♗c4! 54 ♖e3+ ♗b3 55 f4

Or 55 ♖c2 ♖g5+.

55...♖c7 56 ♖b1 a2+ 57 ♗a1

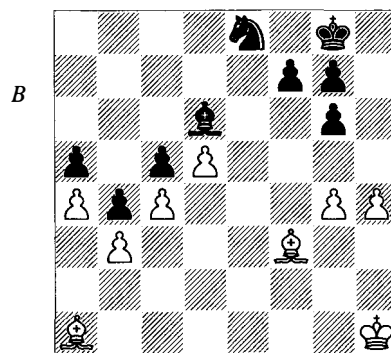
A final trap. After 57...♖xf4? 58 ♖c4! the game would end in a draw, thanks to the stale-mate themes.

57...♖a5 58 ♖d5 ♖d2 0-1

White resigned in view of the threatened ...♖c1-b2#.

(Now return to page 80.)

Exercise 43



Black is not guaranteed an easy life by either 42...♖g3? 43 ♗g2 ♖xh4 44 ♖e5, with ♖b8 to follow, or 42...f6? 43 ♖e4 ♗f7 44 h5!.

And yet he finds an astonishingly simple and convincing path to the draw:

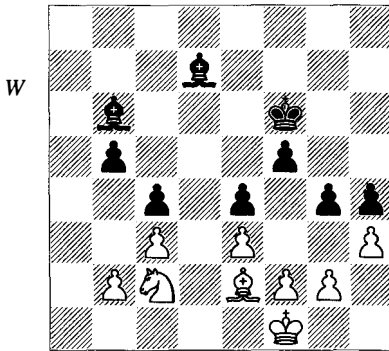
42...g5! 43 hxg5 g6!

The fortress is built! As a result, the light-squared bishop (the very one that was supposed to prove its superiority over the knight) is nothing but a bystander.

44 ♗g2 ♗f8 45 ♖e2 ♗e7 46 ♗f3 ♖c7 1/2-1/2

(Now return to page 80.)

Exercise 44



White would lose with either 1 ♖b4? gxf3 2 gxf3 ♕g5, followed by ...♙e6 and ..f4, or 1 ♕e1 gxf3 2 gxf3 f4! 3 ♙f1 f3!. The only way he can save himself is by constructing a fortress:

1 hxf4! fxf4 2 g3!!

White isn't afraid of Black creating a far-advanced (and protected!) outside passed pawn.

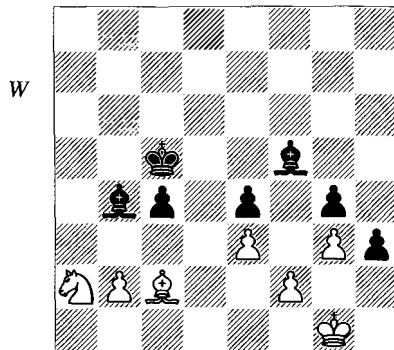
2...h3 3 ♖g1

Missing the chance to end the game in a swift and most striking manner: 3 ♖a3! ♕f5 4 ♖xb5!! ♙xb5 5 ♙d1!, and Black is powerless to breach the redoubts that White has set up. For example, 5...♙d7 6 ♖g1 ♕e5 7 ♖h2 ♕d5 8 ♖g1 ♕c5 9 ♖h2 ♕b5 10 ♖g1 ♕a5 11 ♖h2 ♙a4 12 ♙xg4 ♙c2 13 ♙d7!.

But then the game continuation is also perfectly adequate to draw.

3...♕e5 4 ♖b4 ♕d6 5 ♖h2 ♙a5 6 ♙d1 ♙c8
Or **6...♕c5 7 ♖a6+.**

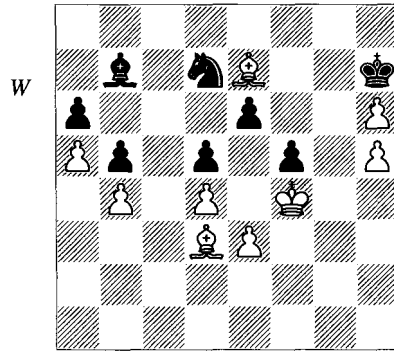
7 ♖a2 ♕c5 8 ♙c2 ♙f5 9 ♖g1 b4 10 cxb4+ ♙xb4 (D)



Additional Exercise 44A: Evaluate the candidate moves 11 ♖xb4 and 11 ♖c3.

(For the answer, see page 104.)

Exercise 45



Black has built a fortress for her defence which White will not succeed in overcoming by simple 'therapeutic' treatment. Playing for zugzwang is hardly a realistic prospect; a method of further restricting the mobility of Black's pieces is not to be seen. One last chance remains: a 'dynamiting' sacrifice, which White may carry out straight away or else after preparation.

During a game under conditions of restricted time and energy, it isn't simple to work out the variations infallibly to the end. In such a case you often have to trust your intuition.

The correct approach here is not to be hasty: 45 ♙c2! ♙a8 (45...♕xh6 loses to 46 ♙d1 ♙c6 47 ♙g5+ ♖h7 48 h6 followed by ♙h5) 46 e4! (a 'dynamiting' pawn sacrifice, suggested by Adrian Mikhalchishin) 46...dxe4 (or 46...fxe4 47 ♙d1 ♕xh6 48 ♙g4 ♙c6 49 ♙g5+ ♖h7 50 ♙xe6) 47 ♙b3 ♙d5 48 ♙xd5 exd5 49 ♙d6! (a mistake would be 49 ♙g5? ♖b8 50 ♕e5 ♖c6+ 51 ♕xd5 ♖xb4+, when 52 ♕e6 ♖c6 53 d5 ♖d4+ 54 ♕e5 ♖f3+ 55 ♕xf5 ♖xg5 56 ♕xg5 e3 57 d6 e2 58 d7 e1 ♖59 d8 ♖ is a drawn queen ending, while 52 ♕d6? ♖d3! is even losing for White) 49...♕xh6 (other continuations also lose: 49...♖f6 50 ♕xf5 ♖xh5 51 ♙g5! or 49...e3 50 ♕xe3 ♖f6 51 ♕f4 ♖e4 52 ♙e5 ♕xh6 53 ♕xf5) 50 ♕xf5 ♕xh5 51 ♙f4! (not 51 ♕e6? ♙g4!) 51...♖f8 52 ♙c1 ♖g6 53 ♕f6! and White wins.

In the game, White's hunch was wrong. She impulsively went in for a different explosive sacrifice of a piece, which looks outwardly attractive.

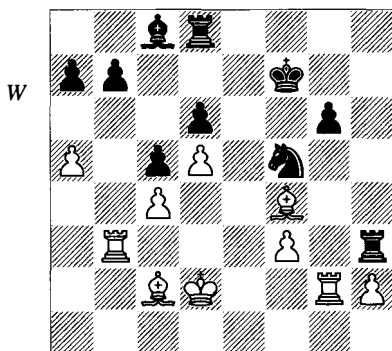
45 ♙xf5+?! exf5 46 ♕xf5 ♕xh6 47 ♕e6 ♖b8! 48 ♕d6 ♖c6 49 ♕c7 ♙a8 50 ♙c5 ♕xh5 51 ♕b6 ♙g4 52 ♕xa6 ♕f3 53 ♕xb5 ♕xe3

The black king comes to the rescue in the nick of time.

54 ♖b6 ♜xb4 ½-½

(Now return to page 81.)

Exercise 46



White's spatial plus and bishop-pair on the threshold of the endgame constitute his advantage. Unexpectedly, however, there followed:

33 ♖xf5 gxf5 34 ♖e3

It now becomes clear that with opposite bishops on the board, the domination of the dark squares by the white pieces gives Black some problems to solve. The threat is 35 ♖ge2.

34...b6

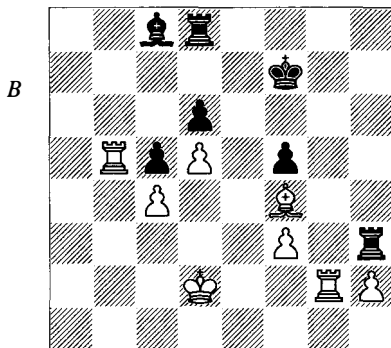
Trying somehow or other to activate his bishop; e.g., 35 ♖ge2 ♖d7 36 ♖e8?! ♖a6.

35 axb6 axb6 36 ♖b3?!

36 ♖a3! is good.

36...b5 37 ♖xb5?! (D)

After 37 cxb5 ♖b7, Black has good chances to survive, but this gives White more practical chances than he ought to have had in the game continuation.



37...♖xf3 38 ♖g5 ♖g8 39 h4 ♖a3 40 ♖g1

Threatening ♖e1.

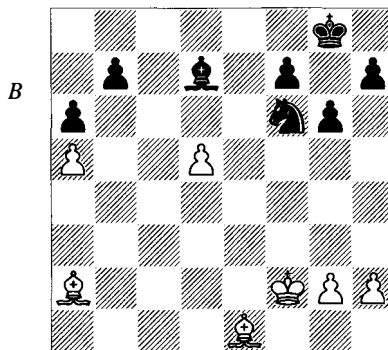
40...f4 41 ♖b6 ♖a6?

Forgetting that with opposite-coloured bishops, activity is paramount. Thus 41...♖a2+ 42 ♖c3 ♖e8 43 ♖xf4 ♖f2 is appropriate, while 41...f3 42 ♖xd6 ♖e8 43 ♖f6+ ♖g7 is another possibility. In both lines Black's bishop can become active on the light squares, and he has enough counterplay to hold the draw – indeed, a draw by repetition is likely in the near future.

42 ♖xa6 ♖xa6 43 ♖f1 ♖b8 44 ♖xf4+ ♖g8 45 ♖e7 ♖b4 46 ♖c3 ♖b1 47 ♖xd6 ♖c1+ 48 ♖b3 1-0

(Now return to page 84.)

Exercise 47



Although White is a pawn down in the ending, he has at least enough compensation, and it is Black who must play carefully if he is to hold the position. For this there are three main reasons: the advantage of the bishop-pair, White's active king which has a clear route to penetrate to the queenside, and his passed pawn.

30...♖f5

Black plays actively, looking to generate threats against White's pawns. He could seek to construct a fortress with 30...♖b5 and ...♜d7, but then he must prepare for a protracted defence.

31 ♖e3 ♖e4 32 ♖d4

32 ♖h4 ♖xd5 33 ♖xf6 ♖xa2 is drawn.

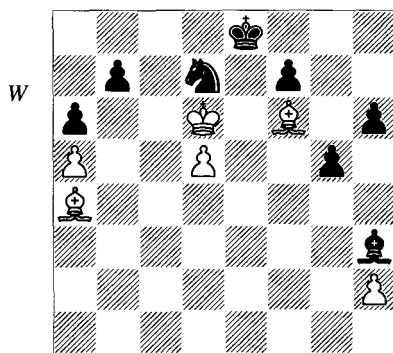
32...♖xg2 33 ♖e5 ♖g7 34 ♖d6 ♖f8 35 ♖b3

After 35 ♖h4 g5 36 ♖g3 ♜e4+ 37 ♖c7 ♜c3 38 d6 ♖c6, Black should hold the draw thanks to the time gained by the attack on White's a2-bishop.

35...g5 36 ♖g3 ♖e8?

36...♖e4+? 37 ♖c7 is good for White, while 36...h5?! 37 ♖e5 offers Black no easy path to salvation. However, 36...♖e8+ is correct, when 37 ♖d7 ♖f6+ repeats, while 37 ♖c5 ♖e7 38 ♖b6 f5 gives Black strong counterplay.

37 ♖e5 ♖d7 38 ♖a4 ♖h3 39 ♖f6 h6 (D)



Black's pieces are totally paralysed despite his two extra pawns.

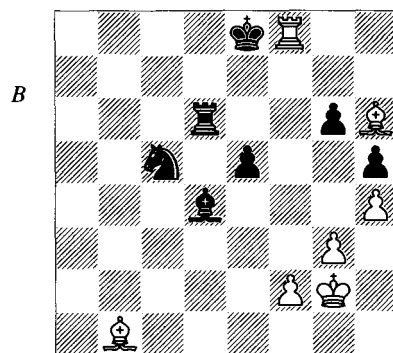
40 ♖c7 ♖f5 41 ♖xb7 ♖f8?

A blunder in a difficult position.

42 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 43 ♖xa6 1-0

(Now return to page 85.)

Exercise 48



We have reached that precise moment when Black failed to readjust in time. Although after the correct 70...♖d7! 71 ♖g8 e4 72 ♖f8 ♖f6 73 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 74 ♖xe4 ♖xf2+ 75 ♖h3 ♖d6 Black has a very tough defensive task ahead of him, he retains distinct drawing chances (the '50%' of which we have spoken) on account of the opposite bishops and the fact that White's bishop is the 'wrong' one for his h-pawn.

But in the game, there followed:

70...♖e7? 71 ♖g8 e4 72 ♖f8+ 1-0

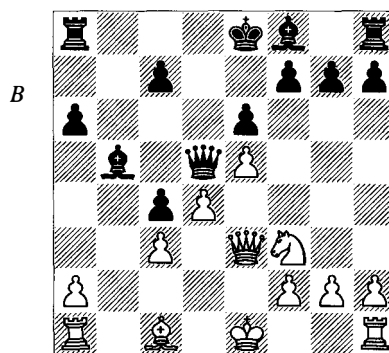
If 72...♖f7 then 73 ♖a2+.

White brilliantly exploited all the overt and concealed resources of the position. I have heard that Anatoly Karpov is an excellent bridge player. Evidently this also helps him in chess.

(Now return to page 89.)

Solutions to Additional Exercises

Additional Exercise 32A



In a tournament game, after drawing up a list of candidate moves, we are sometimes struck by the thought that they are roughly equivalent – why on earth should we split hairs figuring out the difference in strength between them? It wouldn't be worth the time and energy spent on it.

Yet these are the reasonings of a dilettante (and a lazy one at that). A professional will try to decide which of the moves should be made at once and which can wait until a better moment.

Well then... the continuation 15...c5, ridding Black of his doubled pawns, looks inviting at first sight but is actually anti-positional, since (as the course of the game will confirm) Black's control of the b6-square will be very useful in the coming fight for the only open file, the b-file.

The alternative 15...♖e7 16 ♖b1 will subsequently allow White, at the very least, to neutralize Black's pressure on this file.

Black can of course play 15...♖b8 and consent, after 16 ♖b1 ♖b6, to a mere 'draw' in the contest for the b-file.

15...♖c6!

It is such strategic 'trifles' that determine the final outcome of the battle. Now there is no point in 16 ♖b1 on account of 16...♖e4, and the

open file is at Black's disposal after all (17 ♖b2? ♙a3).

16 0-0 ♜b8!

Precision in everything. The careless 16...♙e7 17 ♜b1 ♜e4 18 ♙d2 would allow White to do at least something by way of disputing control of the b-file.

17 ♜e1

Feeling that he has lost the preceding phase of the contest, White prefers to switch to a waiting strategy. That is, he will make unobjectionable moves (like this one, which neutralizes the baneful threat of ...♜e4) and carry on playing by ear. If his opponent later makes a mistake (preferably an outright blunder), so much the better.

Defensive play is a very important part of chess. In this area there are plenty of common nostrums which you have to know and be capable of applying. But two of them are of special importance.

The first requirement is a 'sense of danger': *the sooner we realize that our position is inferior or bad, or that events are beginning to turn round to our detriment, the easier it will be to take the sole possible measures in the hope of salvation.*

Secondly: *on perceiving the necessity for defence, we must do all in our power to bring about a radical change in the course of events on the board, even if this means resorting to dangerous, 'surgical' methods.*

But let us return to the game. Instead of 17 ♜e1 it would of course be senseless to play 17 ♙a4? (aiming to exchange the dark-squared bishops with 18 ♙a3) on account of 17...♜b3.

After 17 ♜g5 (Dolmatov) 17...h6 18 ♜g3 ♜e4 19 ♜e1 ♜g6 20 ♜xg6 fxg6 21 ♙d2 ♙d5, Black's advantage is not in doubt, but this may be better than passively awaiting events.

17...♙e7 18 h4

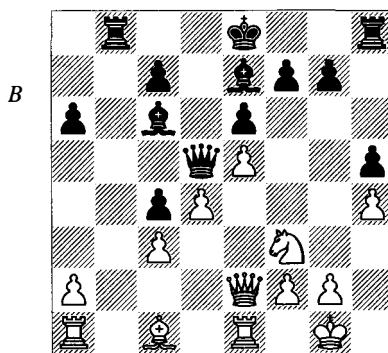
Pawn moves on the wing where one is under attack often provide a useful target for the opponent. However, Black is going to advance on the kingside in any case, and only precise analysis will answer the question of whether this move is a useful way to frustrate Black's plans.

18...h5

Thanks to his mighty pair of storm troops (the queen on d5 and bishop on c6), Black can set up

counter-threats on the kingside. He now threatens 19...♜h6 followed by ...♜g6 and ...♜g4.

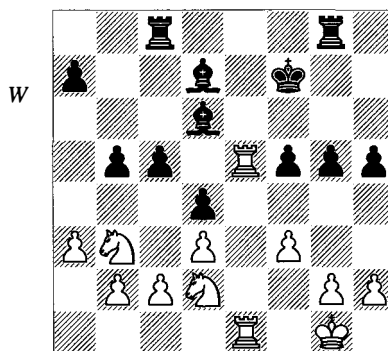
19 ♜e2 (D)



Additional Exercise 32B: Assess the consequences of 19...g5.

(For the answer, see page 103.)

Additional Exercise 37A



I deliberately refrained from annotating the last two moves (so as not to give anything away to the reader). But now I wish to state that 28...f5? was played on impulse, failing to anticipate the impending events. The preparatory 28...♜g6 is correct, especially since White lacks any counterplay whatever.

Fortunately for Black, his opponent still didn't sense the danger of the situation. Otherwise White would have acted on this principle: 'If you want to and can't, but *really* want to – then you must!'

Honestly and objectively facing the fact that the scales were slowly but surely tipping in Black's favour, Richter was simply obliged to harness all his will-power, knowledge, ingenuity and imagination for the purpose of *radically*

altering the course of the struggle. He had to resolve on a line which, though risky, was the sole valid remedy in this situation, involving a desperado of the kind we have seen before. It goes: 30 ♖d5! ♜g6 (30...♜c6 31 ♜xc5) 31 g4 ♜f6 (after 31...fxg4? 32 ♜e4! White's cavalry would launch its raid) 32 gxf5 ♜c6 33 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 34 ♜xc5 and the position has become unpredictable, since 34...♜xf3? 35 ♜xf3 ♜xc5 36 ♜xg5+ ♜g8? 37 ♜e4 ♜e5 38 ♜f6+ would not suit Black at all.

In the game, White played:

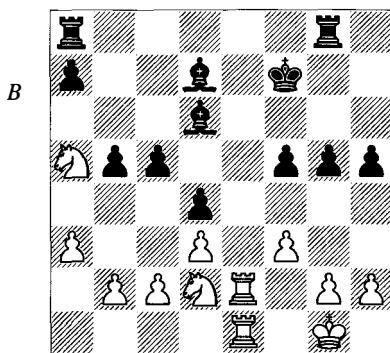
30 ♜5e2?

Passive play against two bishops in the ending is unacceptable!

30...♜a8?!

An understandable move, of course – Black would like to continue restricting the freedom of the knight on b3, by advancing his a-pawn. However...

31 ♜a5! (D)



Cavalry raids – 32 ♜b7 – begin to be a threat.

31...♜ab8 32 ♜ab3 h4 33 ♜h1 ♜g6 34 ♜g1 ♜e6

Intending on the one hand to reposition the king (...♜e7-d7), but also preparing to play ...c4 after a preliminary ...a6, ...♜c8 and ...♜b8-a7. Here again, however, I should like to point out that Black's solution is technically imprecise. As before, the preparatory exchange of a pair of rooks by 34...♜e6 or 34...♜e8 looks more convincing.

35 ♜f2 ♜a8 36 ♜fe2?

This is the final mistake. Richter had no business to allow ...a5. True, he did not like 36 ♜a5 ♜c7, but he could then have continued 37 ♜c6!? or 37 ♜b7 (again a desperado!) 37...♜f4

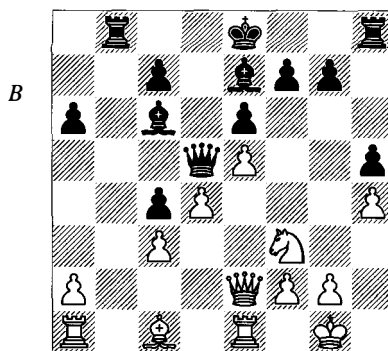
(intending ...♜e3 or ...♜c8) 38 ♜xc5! (the desperado in action) 38...♜e3 39 c4!. Then after the plausible 39...bxc4 40 dxc4 ♜c8 41 b4! ♜c7 42 ♜f1 ♜xf2 43 ♜xf2, White would retain chances of a successful defence.

36...a5! 37 ♜b1 a4 38 ♜3d2 c4 39 ♜f1 ♜c8 40 ♜h1 c3 41 bxc3 dxc3 42 ♜e3 b4

And White resigned on the 47th move.

(Now return to page 71.)

Additional Exercise 32B



19...g5?!

Black's strategy is directed towards increasing the power of his unopposed light-squared bishop. This thrust worked perfectly in the game, but objectively Black should play more quietly, emphasizing his b-file dominance.

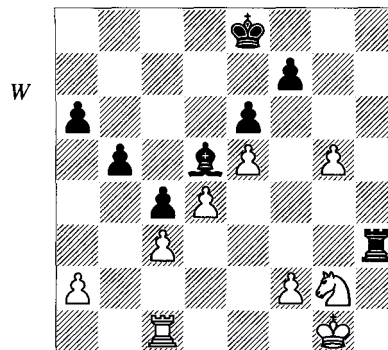
20 ♜xg5 ♜xg5 21 hxg5 h4

To be followed by ...h3.

22 ♜eb1 ♜b6 23 ♜xb6

After 23 ♜e3! h3 24 g6 hxg2 25 g7 ♜g8 26 ♜h6 ♜xf3 27 ♜xb6 cxb6 28 ♜h8 ♜d7 29 ♜xg8 ♜h5 30 f3 Black has no more than a draw by perpetual check.

23...cxb6 24 ♜e1? h3 25 ♜f3 hxg2! 26 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 27 ♜xg2 ♜h3 28 ♜c1 b5 (D)

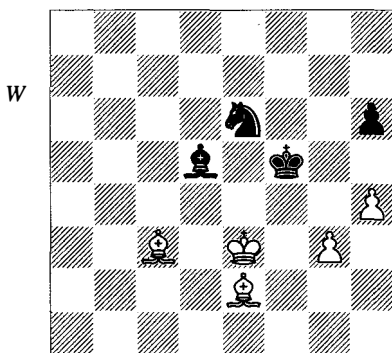


0-1

A pawn up in an ending, White resigned, as his pieces are completely paralysed: he cannot move his king or knight. On 29 f4 Black plays 29...♖g3; then after 30 ♖c2 b4 31 cxb4 ♖xg2+ 32 ♖xg2 ♖xg2 33 ♖xg2 c3, the black pawn goes through to queen. Against passive waiting moves, ...♖d7-c6 is followed by the victorious advance ...a5, ...b4, etc.

(Now return to page 61.)

Additional Exercise 39A



White unexpectedly replied...

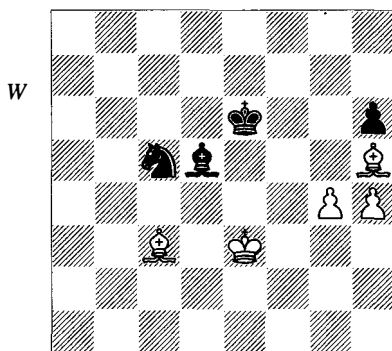
2 ♖h5!!

...and it became clear that owing to the mate threat, the black king would be severed from the defence of the h6-pawn, which would thus be doomed.

2...♖c5 3 g4+

Accuracy is always essential. After the tempting 3 ♖d4 ♖e4 4 ♖e1 ♖b7 5 ♖f3 ♖d6, Black retains drawing chances.

3...♖e6 (D)



4 ♖g6

Alternatively, 4 ♖g7 ♖e4 5 ♖g6 (not 5 ♖xh6? ♖f6) 5...♖f6 6 ♖f5+.

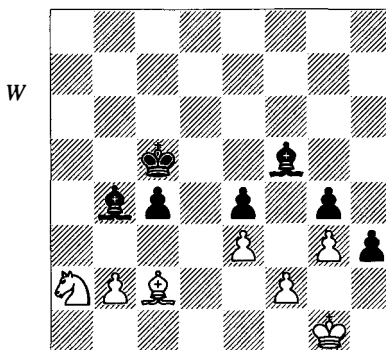
4...♖d7

Or 4...h5 5 gxh5! ♖d7 6 h6 ♖f8 7 h5.

5 ♖g7 ♖f6 6 ♖f5+ ♖f7 7 ♖xh6 ♖g8 8 ♖f4 ♖f6 9 ♖e5 ♖e8 10 ♖f4 1-0

(Now return to page 73.)

Additional Exercise 44A



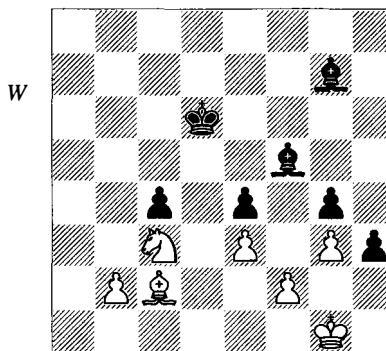
11 ♖c3

This is the simplest way to draw, but 11 ♖xb4 also works, thanks to a stalemate trick: 11...♖xb4 12 ♖h2 c3 13 bxc3+ ♖xc3 and now, e.g., 14 ♖a4 ♖d2 15 ♖c6 ♖e1 16 ♖gl h2+ 17 ♖xh2 ♖xf2 18 ♖xe4! ♖xe4 stalemate.

11...♖d6

11...♖xc3 12 bxc3 ♖b5 13 ♖h2 ♖a5 14 ♖gl ♖d7 15 ♖dl! is a drawn bishop ending.

12 ♖h2 ♖a5 13 ♖gl ♖e5 14 ♖h2 ♖d8 15 ♖gl ♖f6 16 ♖h2 ♖g7 17 ♖gl ♖d6 (D)



18 ♖h2 ♖c5 19 ♖gl ♖b4 20 ♖a2+

Or 20 ♖d5+, which is just as good.

20...♖a5 21 ♖c3 ½-½

(Now return to page 80.)

4 Warning – Trap Ahead!

Traps, pits along my path;
God placed them there, commanded me to go,
And, all-foreseeing, he abandoned me
And sits in judgement! He who would not save me!

OMAR KHAYYAM

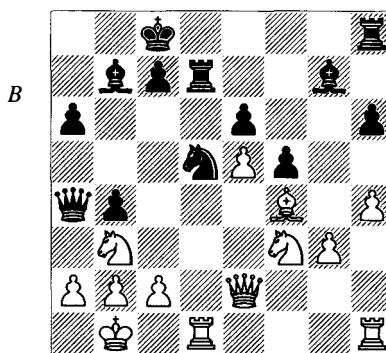
What chess-player has not been familiar with this experience since childhood? You hit on an unexpected piece of play that could easily be missed, and set your opponent a trap. With bated breath, afraid of scaring him off, you wait impatiently to see if he will stumble into the snare you have laid for him. If he does, what a sense of triumph, often ill-concealed, what a feeling of self-satisfaction and elation this gives you! Conversely, what wretchedness, humiliation and outrage you feel if you fall into a trap yourself. The mental wounds that this inflicts can take such a long time to heal...

As defined by the encyclopaedic chess dictionary edited by Anatoly Karpov, “*A trap is an attempt to provoke the opponent into an outwardly favourable continuation which in reality proves mistaken.*”

A trap arises when we have been carefully calculating variations and come across an unexpected coup. That is to say that setting a trap requires well-developed combinative vision. Yet exploiting it as a means to an end is a good deal more complicated than executing a combination.

In Botvinnik’s formulation, “*A combination is a forced variation involving a sacrifice.*” In executing it, we *compel* our opponent to go down a predetermined path and submit to our will. On devising a trap, on the other hand, we merely *offer* the opponent a tasty bait and can only await the results. Therefore, bringing off a trap successfully demands not only chess abilities in the strict sense, but sometimes psychological ones as well. But we shall come to that later.

We shall start with some exercises. Remember that, as in the previous chapters, you should tackle each exercise in turn, and examine its solution (which will often contain a good deal of general comments and advice) in full before reading on.



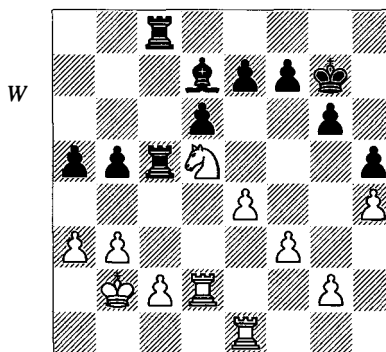
Pirrot – Svidler
Rapidplay, Mainz 2002

White is threatening the unpleasant fork ♖c5. Despite this, Svidler played:

22...♗hd8!

Exercise 49: What was Black’s idea if White carries out his threat?

(For the answer, see page 120.)

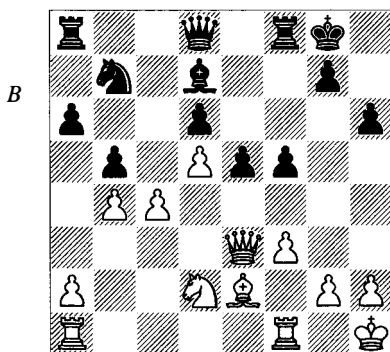


Anand – Kasparov
World Ch match (game 11), New York 1995

In the game, Black played 27...♙e6, giving his opponent the choice between 28 ♖xe7 and 28 b4.

Exercise 50: Choose between these two candidate moves.

(For the answer, see page 120.)



Romanovsky – Botvinnik
Moscow 1945

20...♙g5!?

If Black wants to fight for the initiative, this is the only way! In the event of 20...bxc4 21 ♖xc4 ♙b5 22 ♖fe1 ♖c8 23 ♖b6 ♖c7 24 ♙xb5 axb5 25 a4 bxa4 26 ♖xa4, the knight on b7 proves useless and White's major pieces cannot be prevented from invading the enemy camp.

21 f4

"Black reckoned that in the ensuing complications there would be a chance to utilize the unguarded state of the knight on d2 and the bishop on e2. No doubt White had equally high hopes of exploiting the knight on b7 and the bishop on d7." (Botvinnik).

21...exf4

Otherwise White plays 22 fxe5 dxe5 23 c5.

22 ♙b6!

"This move may not actually be best, but it deserves an exclamation mark because the bold raid with the queen is an interesting idea." (Botvinnik).

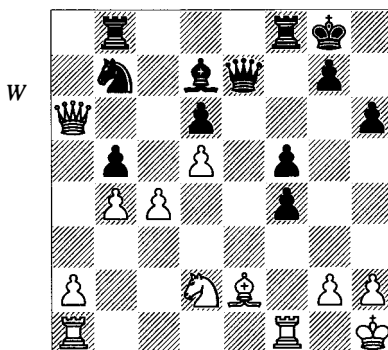
22...♖ab8!

This move is only playable thanks to White's undefended minor pieces.

23 ♙xa6

On 23 c5 dxc5 24 bxc5 ♙e7, White's pawn on c5 and bishop on e2 would both turn out to be *en prise*.

23...♙e7 (D)



Threatening 24...♙e3 followed by 25...♖a8! 26 ♙xb7 ♖a7, trapping the queen.

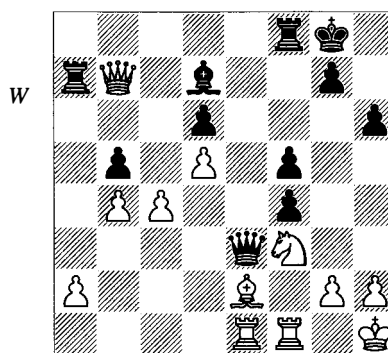
24 ♖a1

A continuation of equal worth is 24 ♖fe1 ♙e3 25 ♖f1 ♙f2 26 ♙a3 (after 26 ♙f3 ♖a8 27 ♙xb7 ♖a7 28 ♖e2 ♙d4 29 ♖d1 ♙xd1 30 ♙xa7 ♙xf1+ 31 ♙g1 ♙xg1+ 32 ♙xg1 bxc4, the advantage is probably with Black) 26...♖fe8 27 ♙f3 ♙b6 (27...♙xf3 also leads to equality) 28 cxb5 ♖e4 29 a3 ♖be8, with a complex game in which the chances should be rated about even.

24...♙e3 25 ♖f3 ♖a8!

If 25...♙c3 then 26 a3.

26 ♙xb7 ♖a7 (D)

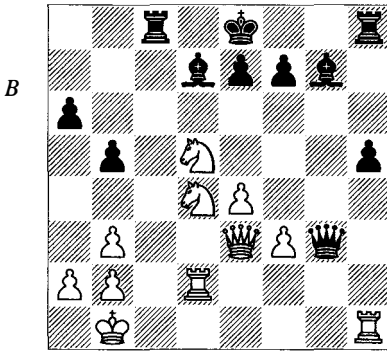


"Black appears to have rid himself of his chief liability, the wretched knight on b7." (Botvinnik).

Exercise 51: Where should the white bishop go? To d1 or d3?

(For the answer, see page 120.)

"Traps are a good thing only in hopeless situations, or when they do not make your position any worse." (Botvinnik).



Boleslavsky – Bondarevsky
USSR Absolute Ch, Leningrad/Moscow 1941

The situation appears dangerous for Black. White's centralized knights are ready to harry Black's uncastled king. At the moment the threat is ♖b6xd7 followed by ♖f5.

However, there followed:

25...♗h6!

Obviously assuming that Black's move was a tactical oversight in a difficult position, Boleslavsky replied:

26 ♖xh5?

To be fair it must be stated that even the best continuation, 26 ♖f2 ♖xf2 27 ♖xf2 e6 28 ♖f6+ ♗e7 29 ♖xd7 ♗e3, would leave Black with an undoubted plus.

The showdown was instantaneous:

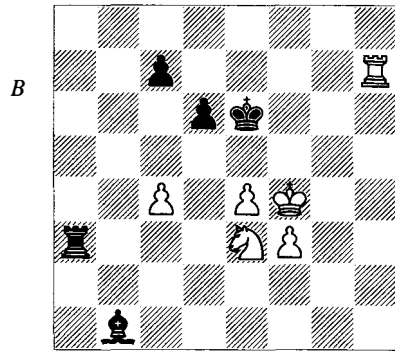
26...♗g8!! 27 ♖d3 ♖g1+ 0-1

White resigned in view of 28 ♖d1 ♖c1+!

"Practice shows that traps most often work when the stronger side's advantage is becoming overwhelming. Psychologically this is perfectly explicable – the fate of the game seems settled; the opponent ought to be resigning any minute. For this very reason, *in very difficult or hopeless positions, a trap should on no account be neglected as a last chance.*" (Dvoretsky).

In the following diagram, Black's position is lost, and Janowski resigned the game.

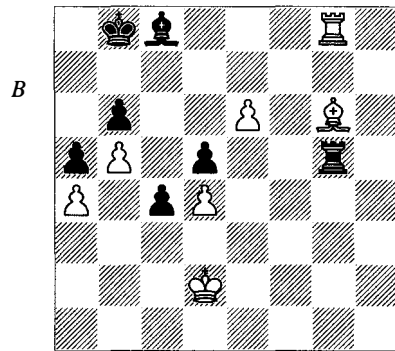
However, it is impossible to disagree with Tarrasch, who commented on this situation as follows: "Demoralized, Janowski laid down his arms too soon instead of making use of his last chance, by no means such a bad one. By continuing 63...c5 64 ♖d5?? (a tempting move, with a mate threat that looks unanswerable!) 64...♖xf3+!! 65 ♗xf3 (on 65 ♗g4 Black has



Em. Lasker – Janowski
World Ch match (game 7), Paris 1909

the defence 65...♖f7) 65...♗xe4+! 66 ♗xe4, he might have brought about a pretty stalemate. Of course his opponent could avoid this with 64 ♖b7. Yet conceivably he might have overlooked the stalemate in the heat of battle."

Even a perfectly uncomplicated trap may take the opponent unawares.



Ruderfer – Dvoretsky
Odessa 1972

Black's position is hopeless. In evident desperation, he played:

57...♗b7

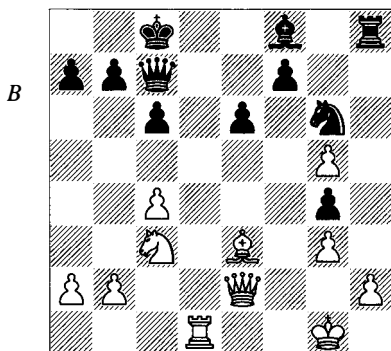
He will have considered that 57...♗c7 58 ♖xc8+ (but not 58 e7? ♗d7) 58...♗xc8 59 e7 also leads to a win for White.

After the move played, White could win by either 58 e7 ♗d7 59 ♖d8 or 58 ♗f7 ♖xg8 59 ♗xg8 ♗c7 60 e7 ♗d7 61 ♗e6+.

However, Ruderfer simply and carelessly played as if there were no difference between Black's two possible king moves:

58 ♖xc8?

*Exercise 52: What had White missed?
(For the answer, see page 121.)*



Kots – Kosikov
Kiev 1977

Assessing the situation is not so simple. White's king position is weakened, and the black pieces are preparing to storm it. No small role is played in this by the pawn on g4, controlling the important square f3 and fixing the white h2-pawn. True, it must be said that the white king is in the company of its own pieces, which are ready to come to its aid in moments of danger. But all this amounts to a static judgement, and in a sharp position it needs to be supported by concrete calculation. Specifically, the g4-pawn is *en prise*. As already pointed out, this is a most important pawn, without which Black's attack is practically impossible. It can be defended by 19...♖e5, but in reply 20 ♖f4 is unpleasant. Then 20...♗g7 is bad, as after 21 ♖h1 the knight perishes. Black also loses with 20...♗d6 21 ♖e4 ♖f3+ 22 ♖xf3 gxf3 23 ♖xd6+ ♖b8 24 ♖xf7. After 20...♖f3+ 21 ♖xf3 gxf3 22 ♖xc7 ♗c5+ 23 ♖h1 ♖xc7 24 ♖e4, with h4 to follow, Black will hardly succeed in saving his f3-pawn and with it the game. His best continuation seems to be 20...♖b6+, but then after 21 ♖h1 ♖f3 22 h4, with threats of ♖d3 or ♖e4-f2, Black's position is critical.

Does this mean it's time for Black to resign? But there will *always* be time for that – *do not rush!* In the game there followed:

19...f5!!

A desperate gesture? White evidently decided that it was – he couldn't explain it in any

other way. Yet this move is very sly, and as we shall soon see, it was not at all played in desperation.

20 gxf6?!

If at this moment White had *forced himself to figure out his opponent's intentions calmly*, he would have found 20 ♖xa7! ♖e5 21 ♖a4!, after which Black's position remains critical. But luckily for Black, this did not happen, and his trap succeeded!

20...♖e5 21 ♖f4?

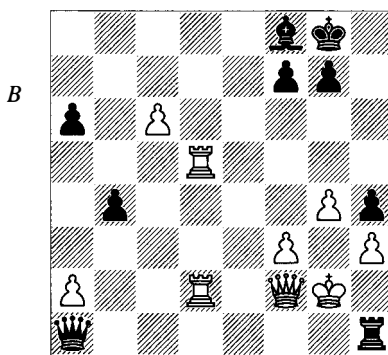
White can still retain an advantage by 21 h4.

21...♖f3+ 22 ♖xf3?? ♗c5+!

It was only at this point that White understood everything. On 23 ♖f1, Black wins with 23...gxf3 24 ♖xc7 ♖xh2. In the main variation after 23 ♖h1, Black delivers mate with the spectacular 23...♖xh2+! 24 ♖xh2 ♖h7+! (this was the reason why Black cleared his second rank with 19...f5!.) 25 ♖g2 ♖h3#. In the game, White played:

23 ♖e3 ♖b6 24 ♖xc5 ♖xc5+

But this no longer affected the result. Black soon won.



Bouaziz – Miles
Interzonal tournament, Riga 1979

In this position, extremely difficult and barely defensible from Black's standpoint, the game was adjourned. White is the exchange up, the approaches to his king are securely guarded and his c-pawn is close to queening. I fancy all this served to convince White that the game would not be resumed...

But it was.

42...♖c1 43 ♖c2 ♖b1 44 ♖dd2 ♖h1

Desperation? White was, after all, threatening 45 ♖xc1 ♗xc1 46 ♖c2. Wait, though. But for his complacency, White would have seen through the astonishingly pretty trap prepared by his opponent, and would not have played....

45 c7?

This was met by:

45...♖xh3!!

How often the phenomenon of ‘serial errors’ occurs in chess! Let us picture a scenario which must surely have cropped up (and not just once, either) in your own playing career.

You are conducting an exceedingly difficult and tense struggle in a very important tournament game. By dint of supreme exertions you are starting to tip the scales in your favour. But how hard it all is for you at this moment – psychologically, intellectually, even just physically (merely lifting your hand to make your move can be an effort). You feel the desire (unconsciously, I dare say) to ease off and relax, if only for an instant. For the long-awaited goal is so near...

Then suddenly, like a tub of cold water over your head – a mistake happens! Your opponent makes a move you hadn’t expected at all.

Of course there is no question of this being a dream. You wake up. The struggle goes on, and blows rain down on you from all sides. You cease to understand what on earth is actually happening. Mistakes follow one after the other, the evaluation of the position changes for the worse...

That is how the phenomenon of ‘serial errors’ comes about.

What should you do in these cases? How do you extricate yourself from such situations with minimum damage?

Of course, the best thing is not to get into such situations at all. As long as the clock is running and the fight continues – don’t fall asleep! But we are all only human, so I should like to give you a set of practical recommendations for these cases.

Rule number one: ‘Don’t castigate yourself!’

You can say a couple of ‘heated’ words to yourself, but no more. Imagine that at this moment some pundit comes up to you and starts scolding you and lecturing you. And instead of

carrying on with the game, you meekly nod, silent and downcast, agreeing to put yourself down as a dolt, duffer and blockhead. ‘Well-wishers’ of that sort should be sent packing!

You have no right to treat yourself so sadistically. You made a mistake – who doesn’t? The reasons for it will be analysed later – after the game, after the tournament. For the duration of the game, ‘the inquest is over – forget it!’ And as long as the tournament struggle goes on – fight, defend yourself to the last bullet!

Rule number two: ‘Calm down!’

The sooner you manage this, the more chances there are of a positive outcome to the struggle. At this moment don’t on any account act hastily. Don’t try to prove to the onlookers (and possibly yourself) that it wasn’t you who made a slip but your opponent who fell into a trap you had set for him. And therefore – *do not rush*. It is fast, unreflecting actions that are the chief cause of ‘serial errors’.

Calm down! Try to regain your previous confidence in your powers.

How? For a start, try to ‘switch off’ for a couple of minutes. To do this, it may help if you come equipped with some methods of your own devising. In the last resort, have a think about something pleasant: yesterday’s brilliant football game won by your favourite team; the happy date you are looking forward to with your favourite girlfriend; beautiful weather... What the hell, just find some way to sustain your spirits!

Rule number three: Ascertain ‘where you stand’.

It quite often happens that after missing our opponent’s move we start panicking, we get agitated and fuss; but then it turns out that the whole thing isn’t as bad as all that – if the evaluation of the position has changed, it has only changed slightly, and overall it is still in our favour. However, even if analysis establishes that the situation is now difficult or even hopeless, then imagine that this is a training session and your severe coach is forcing you to acquire defensive technique and skills for turning the game round.

Therefore, once you have managed to calm down, the first essential task is to reappraise the

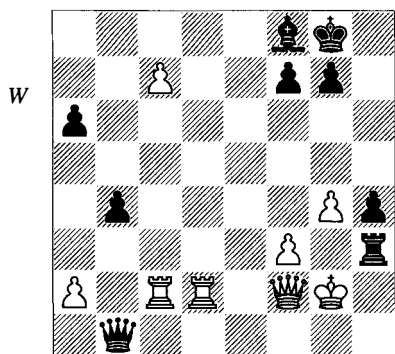
situation on the board honestly and objectively. The main thing here is to rid yourself of any 'residual' emotions.

Rule number four: 'Start again from the beginning!'

Based on your new assessment of the position, you must draw up a new plan of action. And for this, as we know, you once again need to identify the main strategic elements, apply the principle of two weaknesses, etc.

To put it more succinctly – start again from scratch.

But let us return to the game, where Black had just played 45...♖xh3!! (D).



After this hefty blow, I imagine Bouaziz was unable to recover and, most importantly, to grasp where he stood. Otherwise he would have preferred to salvage half a point with 46 ♗f1 ♖g3+ 47 ♖f2 ♖xf3+ 48 ♖xf3 ♗xf1+ 49 ♖e4, when Black has no more than perpetual check.

In the game there occurred:

46 ♖xh3?? ♗h1+ 47 ♗h2 ♗xf3+ 48 ♖xh4 ♖e7+ 49 g5

And what next?

49...♖xg5+!! 0-1

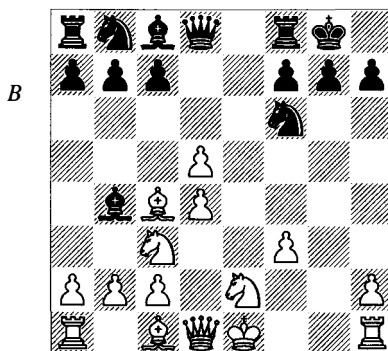
Despite his colossal material plus, White is mated: 50 ♖xg5 f6+ and now 51 ♖h4 g5# or 51 ♖g6 ♗g4#.

We have seen that with 46 ♖xh3?? White made the decisive mistake. But before that, by playing the straightforward 45 c7?, he had let the win slip.

Exercise 53: Indicate a winning continuation for White (in place of 45 c7?).

(For the answer, see page 121.)

Play directed exclusively towards a trap, even a well-masked and ingenious one, cannot be a substitute for a positional continuation, especially if the trap is devised at a cost to our own position.



Alekhine – Levitsky
Match (game 2), St Petersburg 1913

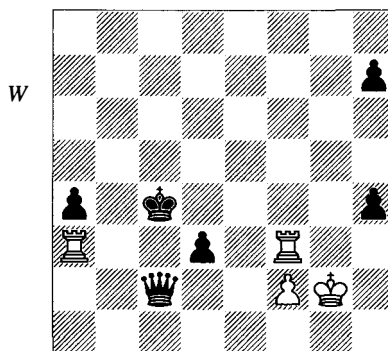
Rather than recover his pawn by 8...♖xd5 9 0-0 ♖e6 with a fully acceptable game, Levitsky tried to tempt Alekhine into a faulty move:

8...♖h3?

Now if 9 ♖f4?!, defending the pawn and attacking the black bishop, there follows 9...♖e8+ 10 ♖f2 ♖f5 (not 10...♖g4+? 11 ♖g3 ♖f2 12 ♗g1! and White wins), when Black has excellent chances.

But White replied 9 ♖g5!, and after 9...♖g2 10 ♖g1 ♖xf3 11 ♗d2! he obtained an excellent attacking position.

Endgame knowledge may enable the defender to give his opponent chances to stumble.



Averbakh – Bondarevsky
USSR Ch, Moscow 1948

The position looks desperate for White, but Averbakh foresaw a possible fortress:

58 ♖f3 ♗xd3 **59** ♖xa4+ ♘d5 **60** ♖xh4 ♘e6?

This allows White to achieve a theoretically drawn position. He must prevent White from planting his rook firmly on h3: **60...♗g6+!** **61** ♘h2 (**61** ♘f1 ♗f5 **61...♗f5** (not **61...h5?** **62** ♖h3) **62** ♘g3 (or **62** ♘g2 ♗g5+ **63** ♘h3 ♗g1) **62...♗e5**+ **63** ♘h3 (**63** ♘f3 ♗g5 **64** ♖g4 ♗f5+ **65** ♘g3 h5 **66** ♖h4 ♗g5+ is similar) **63...h5** **64** ♘g2 ♗g5+ **65** ♘h3 ♘e6 **66** ♖e4+ ♘f5 **67** ♖e3 ♗g1 **68** ♖f3+ ♘e4 **69** ♖f8 ♗g4+ **70** ♘h2 ♗g7 **71** ♖a8 ♘f3, winning.

61 ♖h3

White has achieved the drawing set-up, as Bondarevsky acknowledged 13 moves later.

Kosikov – A. Zubov

Independence Cup, Kiev 2003

1 e4 c5 **2** ♖f3 d6 **3** ♖b5+ ♘c6 **4** 0-0 ♘d7 **5** c3 ♘f6 **6** ♖e1 a6 **7** ♖a4 e5 **8** h3

Not the premature **8** d4?! **b5** **9** ♘c2 cxd4 **10** cxd4 ♘g4.

8...♘e7 **9** d4 **b5** **10** ♘c2 exd4!? **11** cxd4 ♘b4!? **12** ♘c3 ♘xc2 **13** ♗xc2 cxd4 **14** ♘xd4 b4?!

Instead **14...♖c8** looks more natural.

15 ♘d5 ♘xd5 **16** exd5 0-0 **17** ♘c6 ♘xc6 **18** dxc6!?

A critical positional decision. The passed pawn which has appeared on c6 becomes the centre of attention for both sides. It ties down Black's pieces, but then again it may make a tasty meal for them.

In the fight for the initiative, risks must be taken!

18...♘f6 **19** ♘f4?!

Failing to grasp the strategic peculiarities of the position, White plays imprecisely. Better is **19** a3!, which on the one hand brings the rook on a1 into play and on the other hand exposes the weakness of the pawn on a6. In addition, as later events will show, the b2-pawn ought to be kept guarded.

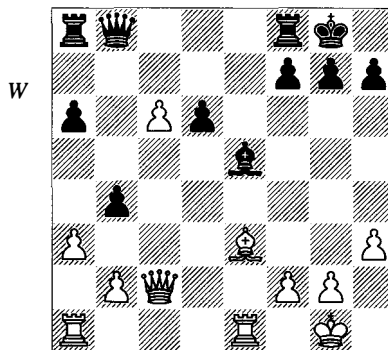
19...♘d4!

Threatening to play **20...♗f6** or **20...♘c5**, after which the 'tasty meal' will most likely be eaten.

20 ♘e3 ♘e5 **21** a3?!

White should probably have refrained from this move. It was worth considering **21** ♖ed1 ♗f6 **22** ♖d2, with ♖ad1 and ♘d4 to follow.

21...♗b8! (D)

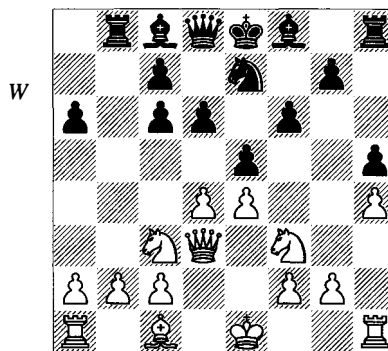


At this point I had an almost physical sensation of how the white position was slowly but steadily deteriorating. Thus for example in the event of **22** axb4 ♗xb4 **23** ♖e2 ♖fc8 **24** ♖a4 ♗b5 **25** ♖c4 ♘xb2, a pawn is lost.

Exercise 54: What is White to do?

(For the answer, see page 121.)

Most often, the main reason for falling into a trap is inattention to the opponent's designs and weak prophylactic thinking.



O. Feuer – O'Kelly

Belgian Ch, Liège 1934

10 ♘e3!

White finishes his development, 'sacrificing' a pawn as he does so.

10...♖xb2?

This move is extremely naïve! Do experienced chess-players give away material just like that?

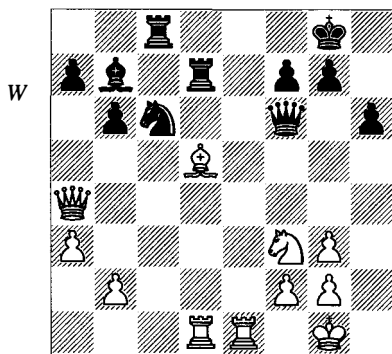
11 dxe5 dxe5?

It still wasn't too late to play 11...fxe5 12 ♖xe5, returning the extra pawn. But 'on principle' Black was loath to reckon with his opponent's intentions. The consequence was:

12 ♖xd8+ ♔xd8 13 0-0-0!

Giving check, and winning both rook and game.

Another thing conducive to falling into a trap is the fatigue that often sets in at an advanced stage of the game.

**Kasparov – Karpov**

World Ch match (game 11), Moscow 1985

The advantage is with White in view of the greater activity of his pieces. Kasparov attacked the rook on d7:

22 ♖g4!

The situation on the board presents no special danger to Black. True, after the passive 22...♖dc7?! 23 b4 he could come under positional pressure, but by continuing 22...♖d6!? he would have every reason to count on equalizing.

However, evidently fatigued by the way the struggle had been going, Karpov allowed himself to relax and play the 'natural' move:

22...♖cd8??

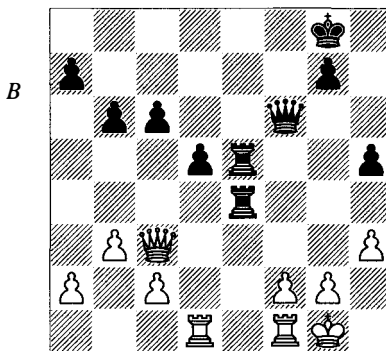
For this, he was instantly punished:

23 ♖xd7! ♖xd7 24 ♖e8+ ♔h7 25 ♖e4+ 1-0

Black resigned in view of 25...g6 26 ♖xd7 ♖a6 27 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 28 ♖xf7#.

"Chess masters do not build their strategy on traps. Constructing a trap at the expense of stronger moves is an unpromising policy, both from the standpoint of improving our chess and

from that of competitive results (when playing at master level). It is a different matter when the trap is a by-product, or more exactly a parallel product of the strategy we are pursuing; in this case the logic of the struggle gives us a fair practical opportunity, and we ought to make use of it." (Viacheslav Dydyshko).

**Bagirov – Kholmov**

USSR Ch, Baku 1961

Black's advantage is not in doubt, given his outright control of the only open file – which could have been consolidated once and for all by 23...♖e6.

Kholmov played:

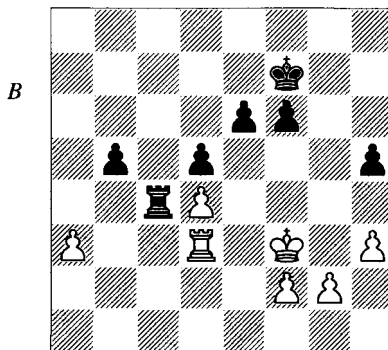
23...c5

Cheering up, Bagirov replied...

24 ♖fe1

Exercise 55: With this attempt to reduce the aggressive force of his opponent's pieces by rook exchanges, what has White missed?

(For the answer, see page 122.)

**Vogt – Kärner**

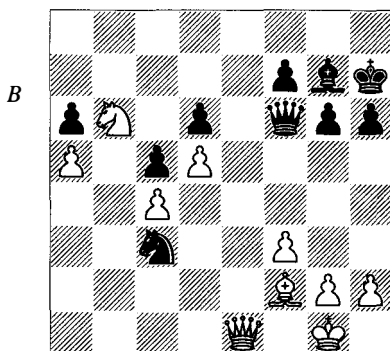
Tallinn 1981

In this rook endgame, the advantage, though slight, is with Black on account of his more active rook position and his superior pawn-structure. Kärner underlines this by playing:

38...h4!

Exercise 56: Choose between the candidate moves 39 ♖g4 and 39 ♖e3.

(For the answer, see page 123.)



Dziadyk – Kosikov

Y.Sakharov Memorial, Kiev 2004

Black's advantage consists primarily in the isolated position of White's idle knight. As a result Black is playing with an extra piece in the principal war zone.

35...♜f5!

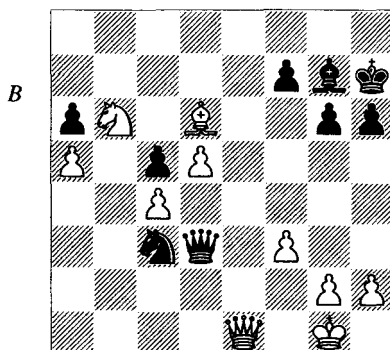
Improving the position of the queen, stopping the white knight from breaking free via c8 or d7, while also preparing a trap.

36 ♙g3?

Dziadyk doesn't sense the danger. 36 h3 is an improvement.

36...♜d3! 37 ♙xd6 (D)

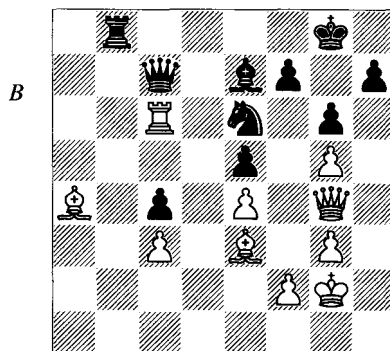
Falling into the trap.



Exercise 57: What has White not seen?

(For the answer, see page 123.)

"Quite a distinctive case is that fairly familiar situation which for brevity we may characterize as 'hunting the hunter'. This occurs when both players take delight in heading for the same position, since one of them has 'cast a net' while the other has noticed a hole in it." (Yakov Damsky).

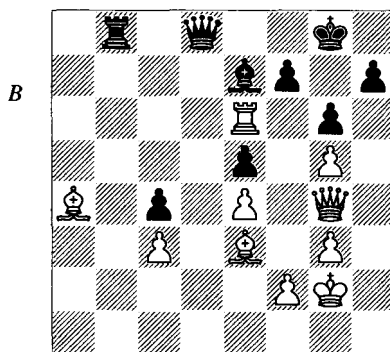


Fischer – Shocron

Mar del Plata 1969

Black's position is perfectly acceptable. At this point, after 38...♜d7! 39 ♜xc4?! ♜d3, with 40...♜b1 to follow, he would have every chance of going over to the counter-attack. Shocron, however, decided to 'dig a pit' for his opponent – but fell into it himself:

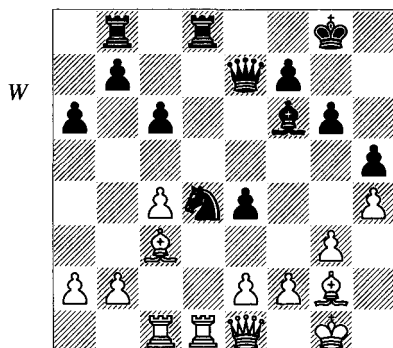
38...♜d8? 39 ♜xe6 (D)



39...♜c8

It's too late to back out: 39...fxe6 40 ♜xe6+ ♜f8 41 ♜xe5 ♜f7 42 ♙c6 and 43 ♙d5+ gives White a decisive attack.

40 ♙d7!! 1-0



Bannik – Tal
USSR Ch, Moscow 1957

Provoking Tal into falling for a prepared trap, White played:

25 ♖d2? e3 26 fxe3 ♜xe3+ 27 ♜f2 ♘xe2+
“It’s worked! There’s no way back for Black now,” Bannik must have been thinking.

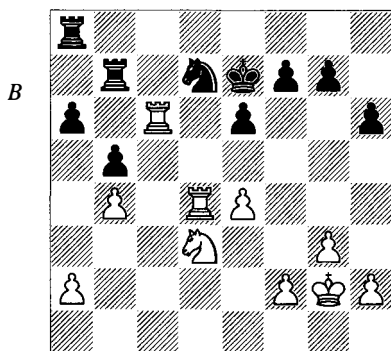
28 ♜xe2 ♜xc1+ 29 ♜e1

Is the fight all over? On 29...♜d1 White has 30 ♜xf6 ♜xe1+ 31 ♜h2, winning. Wait, though. ‘For every cunning goose there is another goose, only *more* cunning!’

The game continued:

29...♜xc3! 30 ♜xc1 ♜d4

The material advantage is now with Black, and he made sure of converting it into a win.



P. Schmidt – Pirc
Noordwijk 1938

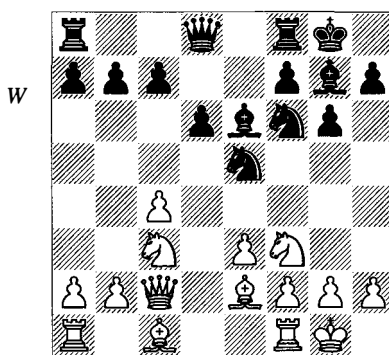
Although Black’s position is rather cramped, the accurate continuation 29...♜a7 would enable him to maintain the balance; for example, 30 ♜dd6 ♘b8! 31 ♜b6 ♜xb6 32 ♜xb6 ♘d7 33 ♜c6 a5.

Black decided to rid himself of all his problems at one stroke, while setting his opponent a trap into the bargain:

29...♜b6?

Now 30 ♜c7? presents no danger for Black after 30...♜d6 31 ♜xd6 ♜xd6, while on 30 ♜xd7+ ♜xd7 31 ♜xb6? ♜c7, the impetuous white rook is lost.

In the game, after 30 ♜xd7+! ♜xd7, the zwischenzug 31 ♘e5+! put everything in order – Black discovered to his dismay that the trap had snapped shut, but at his own expense.



Robatsch – Makarychev
Lublin 1976

Exercise 58: What do you think of 10 ♘d4 in this position?

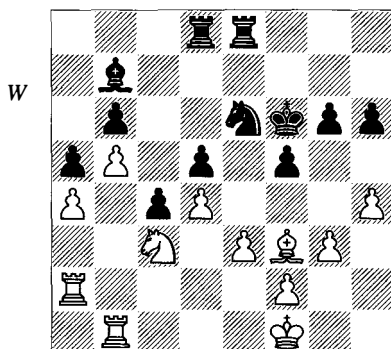
The ability to work out variations accurately is a key indicator of a player’s level of mastery. What is most important here is to calculate the variations to the end and not break off half-way.

(For the answer, see page 123.)

As already pointed out, between a combination and a trap there is an undoubted thematic connection. But whereas playing a combination means carefully working out the variations and then making your decision, pulling off a trap requires more than this. You need to be able to hide your intentions up until the right moment, so as not to warn your opponent and let him off the hook. This requires you to master not only purely technical but also psychological methods of chess warfare.

In his time, a great master of this type of play was Mikhail Botvinnik. We shall now examine three examples from his games. The notes in

quotation marks (slightly abridged in places) are his own.



Botvinnik – Moiseev
Moscow 1951

White's advantage is obvious. Black's bishop is 'bad' and his passed pawn on c4 is firmly blockaded, which means that White is playing with an extra pawn in the centre and on the kingside. Yet exploiting the advantage is extremely difficult, since Black has constructed something in the nature of a fortress that is not simple to demolish.

"Now or later, Black could push his h-pawn to h5, closing the position still further. In that case, in order to break through, White would have to play a preliminary f3; in a certain degree this all looked problematic."

31 ♖g2 ♜h8 32 ♜h1 ♜he8

"Black appears to be quite satisfied with his pawn-structure and makes no attempt to alter it. So much the better!"

33 ♜d2 ♜e7 34 ♜e2 ♜ee8 35 ♖f1

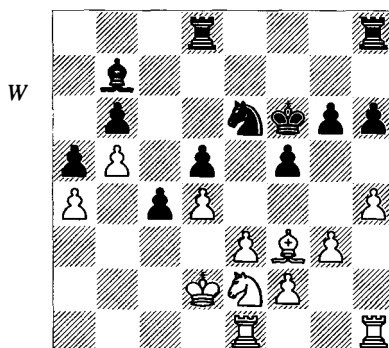
"Now White can bring his king unhindered to d2, where it will relieve the knight from blockading the c-pawn and may in some circumstances make it difficult for the black bishop to attack the a4-pawn."

35...♜h8 36 ♖e1 ♜he8 37 ♖d2 ♜e7 38 ♜e1

"Up to the moment of the pawn-break, both rooks need to be stationed on the first rank. Now all that remains is to secure control of the f4-square."

38...♜e8 39 ♖e2 ♜h8?! (D)

"Black neglects his last chance to play ...h5. Could he have supposed that White was not dreaming of accomplishing a breakthrough?"



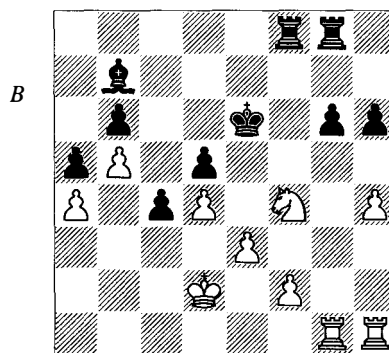
40 g4! ♜hg8 41 ♜eg1 fxg4?!

"This somewhat facilitates his opponent's task; it was better to allow the continuation 42 gxf5 gxf5 (but not 42...♖xf5? 43 ♖g4+) 43 ♖g3."

42 ♖xg4 ♜df8?!

"Quite likely the losing move. It was imperative to activate the bishop with 42...♖c8, since with this piece on b7 the opening of the game is catastrophic for Black."

43 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 44 ♖f4+ (D)



44...♖d6

"In the event of 44...♖f6 45 ♜h3, the bishop would remain in its passive position. Then either White would win the g6-pawn (45...♜f7 46 ♜f3), or else after 45...g5 the h-file would be opened and a white rook would invade the enemy camp. But in the present case too, the loss of a pawn is unavoidable."

45 ♜h2

"Defending the f-pawn and threatening 46 ♜xg6+."

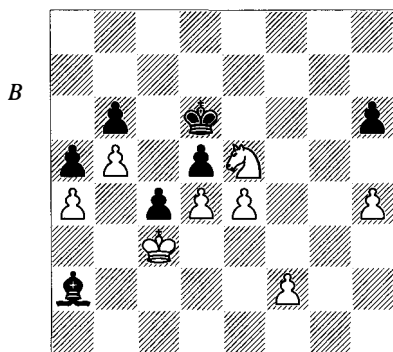
45...♜f6 46 ♜hg2 ♖c8

"Alas, too late..."

47 ♜xg6 ♜gxg6 48 ♜xg6 ♜xg6 49 ♖xg6 ♖f5 50 ♖e5 ♖b1

"If White had not transferred his king to d2 in good time, Black could have played 50...♙c2 here, with an uncertain outcome."

51 ♖c3 ♙a2 52 e4! (D)

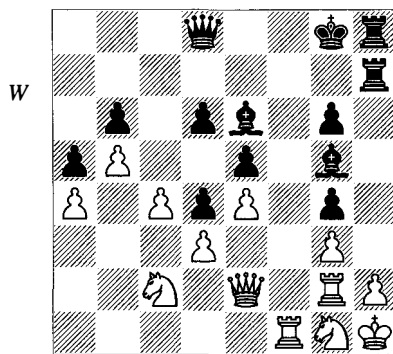


"This is the simplest way to cope with the enemy bishop's aggressive manoeuvre."

52...dxe4

"If 52...♙b3 then 53 exd5, and resignation will be in order after either 53...♙xd5 54 ♖d7 or 53...♙xa4 54 ♖xc4+. But the pawn ending is also hopeless for Black."

53 ♖xc4+ ♙xc4 54 ♙xc4 h5 55 d5 ♙e5 56 d6 ♙xd6 57 ♖d4 1-0



Sliwa – Botvinnik
Budapest 1952

In this position the game was adjourned. White sealed:

41 ♖ff2

"Analysis showed that a straight fight to seize the open f-file would merely lead to exchanges of the major pieces.

"The only possibility of avoiding this lies in bringing a rook to f5. Then acceptance of the

sacrifice (exf5) opens up the a8-h1 diagonal, while an exchange (a rook capturing on f5) allows Black to obtain an f-pawn and use it as a battering-ram.

"Since this operation needs to be carried out under favourable conditions, Black endeavours to conceal his intentions for the time being, so as to take his opponent unawares."

41...♙g7 42 ♖e1 ♖h5 43 ♖e2 ♖e7 44 ♖f1 ♙g8

"One rook is already prepared for the jump to f5; Black's other major pieces have to be lined up on the h-file."

45 ♖ff2 ♙g7 46 ♖f1 ♖h6 47 ♖ff2 ♖h7

"This rook needs to have the option of switching to the f-file. What now remains is to bring the bishops into position."

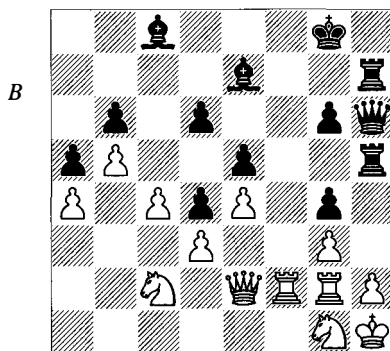
48 ♖f1 ♙d7

"White moves up and down with one rook, with the evident aim of bringing home to his opponent the futility of his attempts to win a 'drawn' position. In playing my last move I was counting on this, since the black rook needs to go to f5 at a moment when the white rook is on f2. We shall later see why this is necessary. So..."

49 ♖ff2 ♙c8 50 ♖f1 ♙e7

"The bishop only clears the rook's path at the last moment." (My emphasis – A.K.)

51 ♖ff2 (D)



51...♖f5!!

"Just at the right moment! If White's rook were on f1, he would have the defensive resource 52 ♖gf2. Now all replies lead to defeat.

"If 52 ♖xg4?, then 52...♖xf2 53 ♖xc8+ ♖f8 54 ♖e6+ ♙h8.

"In the event of 52 exf5? ♙b7, the threat of 53...♖xh2# is decisive.

“Finally, 52 ♖e1 is met by 52...♗h5 53 exf5 (otherwise Black plays 53...♙b7 anyway, then ...♙g5 and if appropriate ...♙e3 and ...♗hf7; on exf5 he goes back with ...♗h7) 53...♙b7 54 ♖gf3 gxf3 55 ♖xf3 gxf5, after which Black wins by advancing his centre pawns.

“In the game, Black won even more simply than in this last line. Such was the effect of surprise!”

52 ♖f1? ♖xf1 53 ♗xf1 ♖f7 54 ♗e1

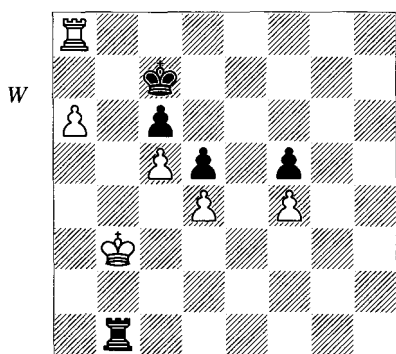
“Or 54 ♖f2 ♖xf2 55 ♗xf2 ♗c1! with irresistible threats.”

54...♗f8 55 ♖e2 ♖f1 56 ♗d2 ♖f3+ 57 ♖g2 ♖d1

“Now White must choose between succumbing in the endgame after a queen exchange or trying for some activity before the curtain comes down.”

58 ♗h6 ♗f6 59 ♖d2 ♙f8 60 ♗xf8+ ♗xf8 61 ♖xd1 ♖f2 62 ♖e1 ♗b2 0-1

“Quite an amusing zugzwang has come about – 63 ♖g2 ♗c2.”



Tal – Botvinnik

World Ch match (game 20), Moscow 1961

“The general opinion was that the adjourned position was hopeless for Black. A sleepless night, the second in a row – and in the morning the chief and most obvious threat was rendered harmless by a surprising stalemate possibility.” (Botvinnik).

White’s main threat is to exchange the pawn on a6 for the one on f5. This will compel Black to transfer his king to the kingside. Then according to the principle of two weaknesses, the white king penetrating on the queenside should break down Black’s defence.

Let us follow what happened on resumption:

89 ♖a2 ♖b5 90 a7 ♖a5+

Forced. The pawn endgame after 90...♙b7? 91 ♖b8+ ♖xa7 92 ♖xb5 cxb5 93 ♙b3 is lost for Black.

91 ♙b3 ♙b7 92 ♖f8 ♖b5+!

Botvinnik’s brilliant discovery. The aim of this seemingly ‘pointless’ check will only become clear after four more moves.

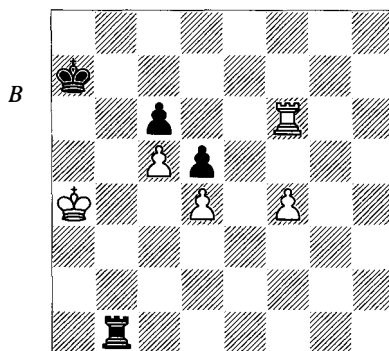
93 ♖a4?

The trap has worked! In playing this move, Tal as yet suspected nothing. Otherwise he would have abandoned any instant winning attempt and played 93 ♙c3. This would still have been an achievement for Black, even if only a psychological one.

“Less active play by White would leave Black with hopes of a draw.” (Botvinnik).

93...♖xa7 94 ♖xf5 ♖b1 95 ♖f6 (D)

At last White has seen through the trap. What looks like the winning line, 95 ♖f7+ ♖a6 96 ♖c7, would meet with the crafty retort 96...♖b4+!!, when White’s only choice is between assenting to stalemate and allowing all the pawns to be eliminated.

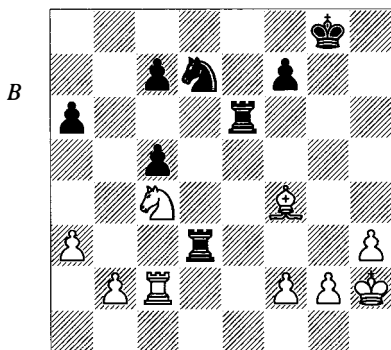


After the move played, White’s basic plan is impossible; the black rook is able to drive the white king away from the queenside.

95...♙b7 96 f5 ♖a1+ 97 ♙b4 ♖b1+ 98 ♙c3 ♖c1+ 99 ♖d2 ♖f1 100 ♙e3 ♙c7 101 ♖f7+ ♙d8 102 ♙e2 ♖f4 103 ♖d3 ♖f3+ 104 ♖d2 ♙c8 105 ♙e2 ♖f4

And it was only after 16 more moves that White acquiesced to the draw.

The best thing of all is when the trap involves a move that fits in with the plan you are pursuing.



Simagin – Kholmov
Uzhgorod 1966

43...♟f6!

Black improves the position of his knight and at the same time sets a trap, into which his opponent falls.

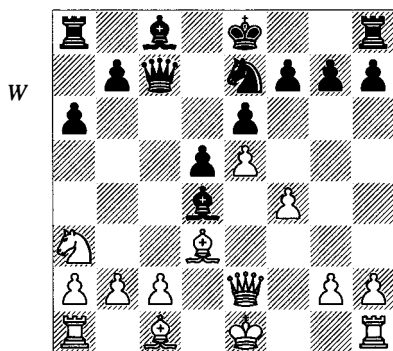
44 ♙xc7??

After the correct 44 ♙e3 ♟e4 45 g4, the position would be about equal.

In the game, after...

44...♟g4+! 0-1

...White immediately had to acknowledge defeat.



Nezhmetdinov – Konstantinov
Rostov-on-Don 1936

11 c3!

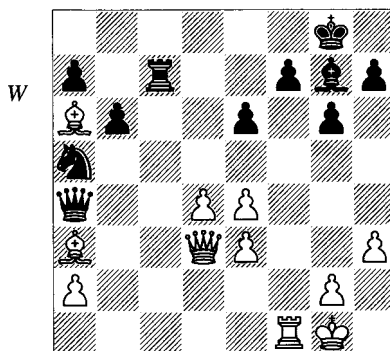
This move, which is positionally essential for White (he plans ♟c2 and ♙e3), sets a trap at the same time.

11...♙xc3+??

It worked!

12 bxc3 ♜xc3+ 13 ♜d2! ♜xa1 14 ♙b1! 1-0

The queen is caught in the net; there is no satisfactory defence against 15 ♙b2. Black therefore resigned.



G. Kuzmin – Kochiev
USSR Ch semi-final, Minsk 1976

32 d5!

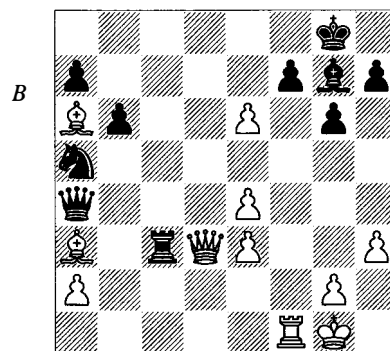
"An excellent trap! Even after 32...exd5 33 ♜xd5 the advantage would remain with White: 33...♜xa3 34 ♜d8+ ♙f8 35 ♜xc7, or 33...♜e8 34 ♙d6 ♜d7 35 ♙b5." (Dvoretsky).

Black, however, accepted the challenge:

32...♜c3?

To his surprise there followed:

33 dxe6!! (D)

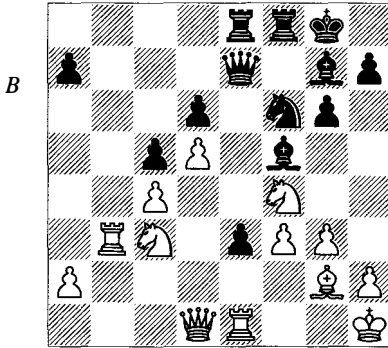


33...♜xd3

If 33...♜xa3 then 34 ♜d7!.

34 exf7+ ♙h8 35 ♙b2! 1-0

"It sometimes happens that a trap arises automatically, simply as a result of the painstaking calculation of variations. Weighing up all the possibilities, we choose the line that promises the most chances of victory." (Dvoretsky).



T. Reich – Dolmatov
Passau 1996

“The main sensitive spot in Black’s position is his far-advanced passed pawn on e3. White threatens to attack it by moving his knight away from c3. There is also another way of assailing the pawn: 25 ♖e6 ♗xe6 26 ♜xe3. Dolmatov’s opponent is sure to have been banking on these threats above all else.” (Dvoretsky).

With all this in mind, Dolmatov played:

24...g5!!

This move sets White a trap, but not sensing the danger, he played:

25 ♖e6?

Admittedly, Black would also have the advantage after 25 ♖h3 g4. However, after 25 ♖fe2 or 25 ♖d3, the attack on the e3-pawn would subsequently have given White enough counterplay to level the chances.

In the game there followed:

25...♗xe6 26 ♜xe3 ♖g4!! 0-1

It emerges that 27 ♜xe6 is met by 27...♖f2+ 28 ♖g1 ♖xd1, and 27 fxg4 by 27...♗xg4 28 ♜xe7 ♗xd1 29 ♜xe8 ♜xe8, winning for Black in either case. White therefore resigned.

Stopkin – Kosikov

Independence Cup, Kiev 2003

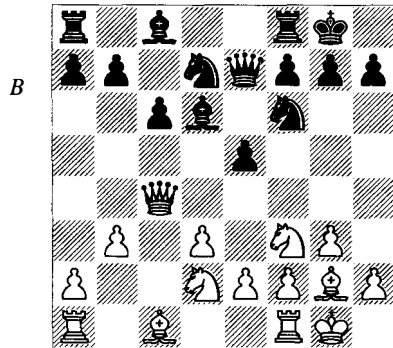
1 ♖f3 ♖f6 2 g3 d5 3 ♗g2 c6 4 c4 dxc4 5 ♜c2 ♖bd7

The thematic continuation is of course 5...b5, but at that moment I was ‘not yet awake’ (the last-round games were played in the morning), and was afraid of making some tactical slip. For that reason I was psychologically prepared to allow my opponent a slight plus in the opening and transfer the focus of the battle to the middlegame.

6 ♜xc4 e5 7 0-0 ♗d6 8 d3!?

An opening strategy that surprised me (although, as we shall see, it isn’t devoid of cunning) – White doesn’t even attempt to utilize his lead in development, however slight. I had expected 8 d4.

8...0-0 9 ♖bd2 ♜e7 10 b3 (D)



At this point I realized it was time to ‘wake up’ and anticipate where the game was going, before I stumbled into the abyss. It’s obvious how White is going to finish his development: ♗b2, ♜ac1, ♜fd1, ♜c2, ♖c4, with ♖xd6 to follow – or, if the dark-squared bishop leaves the a3-f8 diagonal, White plays ♗a3.

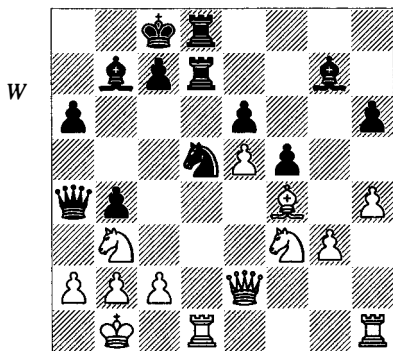
Exercise 59: What is Black to do? Devise a game plan and the corresponding arrangement of the black pieces.

(For the answer, see page 123.)

To sum up the foregoing chapter, I would like to state this conclusion: *A trap is a powerful strategic weapon, and the correct handling of it can bring a player considerable dividends.*

Answers to Exercises for Chapter 4

Exercise 49



White's combinative vision fell short:

23 ♖c5? ♜b5!?

Good enough, but 23...♜xf4! 24 gxf4 ♜b5 is a more accurate execution of the same idea.

24 ♜xb5 ♖c3+! 25 bxc3 ♜xd1+ 26 ♜xd1 ♜xd1+ 27 ♜b2 axb5 28 ♖d4?

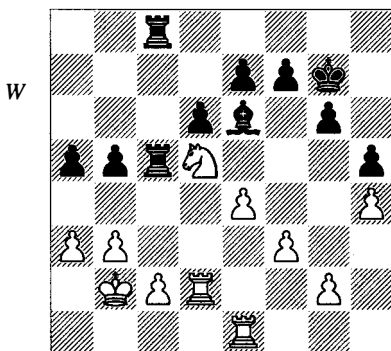
28 ♖xe6 puts up more resistance.

28...bxc3+ 29 ♜xc3 b4+! 0-1

A knight perishes for good measure.

(Now return to page 105.)

Exercise 50



28 b4?

White falls into the trap. After 28 ♖xe7! ♜e8 29 b4 axb4 30 axb4 ♜c4 31 ♖d5, the only question is whether Black can survive: 31...♜xd5 (31...♜a8 32 c3 ♜c6 33 ♜a1 gives White every chance of victory; 31...♜ec8 32 c3 ♜xd5 33 ♜xd5 is the same as the next bracket) 32 ♜xd5

♜xb4+ (32...♜ec8 33 c3!? ♜xc3 34 ♜e2! is pleasant for White) and now Kasparov gave 33 ♜c1 f5 with equality, but 33 ♜c3 ♜c4+ 34 ♜b3 is more testing.

28...axb4 29 axb4

Probably 29 ♖xb4, consenting to peace negotiations, would have been more sensible.

29...♜c4 30 ♖b6??

By now White has clearly lost his bearings. Instead, the four-rook ending after 30 ♖xe7 ♜c7! 31 ♖d5 ♜xd5 is most unpleasant for White, so 30 c3 was probably the best try.

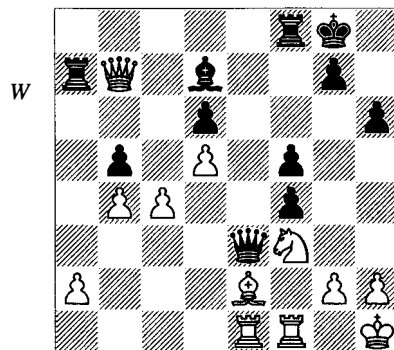
30...♜xb4+ 31 ♜a3 ♜xc2!!

... nine, ten. Out! All is now plain, and there is nothing more White can do about it.

32 ♜xc2 ♜b3+ 33 ♜a2 ♜e3+ 0-1

(Now return to page 106.)

Exercise 51



In the game, there followed:

27 ♜d3?

Evidently under fatigue from the foregoing course of the fight, White makes a mistake which decides the game. The right move is 27 ♜d1!, after which 27...♜xb7 28 ♜xe3 fxe3 29 c5 dxc5 30 bxc5 ♜c7 31 c6 ♜xc6 32 dxc6 ♜xc6 33 ♜b3+ ♜h7 34 ♖d4 ♜d6 35 ♖xb5 ♜d2 gives approximate equality.

27...♜xb7 28 ♜xe3

And now instead of 28...fxe3? 29 c5!, on which White had probably been counting, Black played:

28...bxc4!

"Black renounces the win of the exchange, but on the other hand he stops his opponent from obtaining two connected passed pawns." (Botvinnik).

29 ♜e7

29 ♖xc4 fxe3 is also hopeless for White.

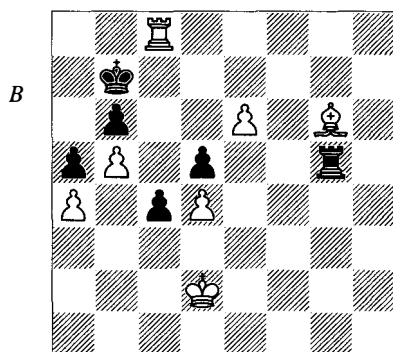
29...cxd3 30 ♖e1 ♜f7 31 ♜xf7 ♜xf7 32 ♖xd3 ♖b5 33 ♜d1 ♖xd3 34 ♜xd3 ♜xb4 35 ♜d1 ♜a4 36 ♜d2 ♜f6 37 h4

There is no salvation in 37 ♜e2 ♜e4! 38 ♜xe4 fxe4 39 a4 ♜e5 40 a5 ♜xd5, as the black king is in the square of the a-pawn.

37...g6 38 ♜g1 ♜e5 0-1

(Now return to page 106.)

Exercise 52

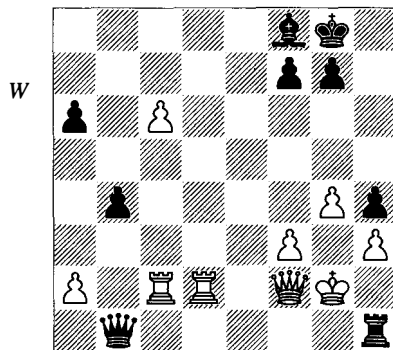


It was only after 58...♜g2+ that White realized, to his surprise and dismay, that the e-file was a minefield for his king because of a rook check: 59 ♜e1?! ♜xg6 60 e7?? ♜e6+ and 61...♜xc8.

Therefore, in view of the repetition with 59 ♜c3 ♜g3+ 60 ♜d2, a draw was immediately agreed.

(Now return to page 108.)

Exercise 53

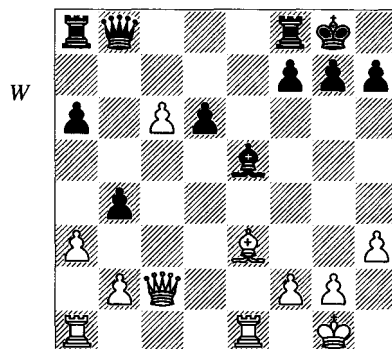


One way is 45 ♜d8!? ♜xh3 (45...♜c1 46 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 47 ♜c5+ and 48 ♜xc1) 46 ♜xh3 ♜h1+ 47 ♜h2 ♜xf3+ 48 ♜xh4 ♜f6+ 49 g5

♜xd8 and now White has a choice of moves that retain a decisive plus, of which 50 ♜f4 is the most convincing. However, there are other approaches, most notably 45 g5!, which neutralizes Black's main idea, as after 45...♜xh3 46 ♜xh3, White's king has the g4-square at its disposal.

(Now return to page 110.)

Exercise 54



Honestly admitting to myself that my position could well be inferior, I started looking for a way out of the current situation. And I discovered a solution.

The game continued:

22 axb4

We should note that a number of other moves are possible here, such as 22 c7, when White may be able to play for an advantage.

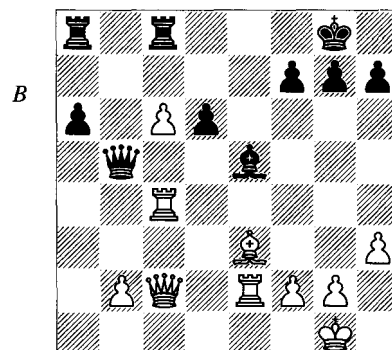
22...♜xb4

Attacking the b2-pawn, so a forced move follows:

23 ♜e2

And further:

23...♜fc8 24 ♜a4 ♜b5 25 ♜c4! (D)



'Wait,' you may be saying in astonishment. 'Didn't we just look at this line and reject it?'

Did we look at it? Yes! Did we reject it? No!

When earlier analysing the position that we now have before us, I had managed to unearth some hidden resources, imperceptible at first sight but associated with the defects of Black's game.

When the position arose, Zubov almost instantly reached for the bishop on e5 to deliver his blow. But something stopped him. He took his hand away and started thinking, probably wondering why things were proving so easy for him. Had I really blundered? Or perhaps I had just resigned myself to the loss of a pawn?

Not wishing to disturb him, or rather worrying that my agitation might 'scare him off', I walked away from the board and awaited my fate from a distance. Seven or eight minutes passed before my opponent made his move. Returning quickly to the board, I discovered with amazement, delight and suspicion (could I have missed something?) that he had played:

25...♙xb2??

We have already come across cases where the evaluation of the position abruptly changes in favour of one side or the other. And we said that even a transformation for the better can have an adverse effect if the player loses his objectivity.

So it is in the present situation – Black has decided that he virtually has a won game already. But this is wrong. White's preceding inaccuracies have merely enabled Black to obtain a more or less tenable game, no more than that.

After 25...♖ab8 (25...a5 26 b3) 26 ♙a7 ♖a8 27 ♙e3, the game could have ended in a draw by repetition (though White is not obliged to go in for this). At the present moment Black has allowed his effort to slacken, and as a result his sense of danger is dulled.

The unexpected continuation is lethal:

26 ♜h4!

Psychologically, the reason why this move was unexpected was that, in a position where time is critical, the white rook has permitted itself the 'luxury' of three moves in a row, a1-a4-c4-h4, two of which, moreover, were along the fourth rank.

The upshot is that 26 ♜h4! proves to be a crafty dual attack – the bishop on b2 and the

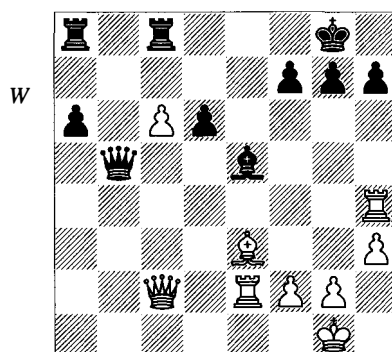
pawn on h7 are *en prise*. Loss of either of these units is tantamount to defeat.

At this point, I should apologize for the dubious signs awarded to White's earlier play, such as his 19th and 21st moves. Objectively, these moves do not deserve such harsh criticism, but this was necessary to place the reader in a pessimistic state of mind, and so force you to try to assess the position objectively in spite of an unjustly negative prognosis.

Black chose:

26...♙e5 (D)

He would lose at once with 26...♙f6 27 ♜xh7+ ♙f8 28 ♙c5!.



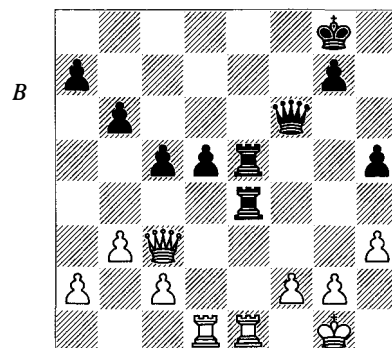
27 ♜xh7+ ♙f8 28 ♜e1 ♜xc6

The desperado pawn has met its end after all, but at what a cost to the opponent! The move played loses by force, but it is hard to suggest anything better.

29 ♙g5 f6 30 ♙h6 gxh6 31 ♖g4 ♜d5 32 ♖g7 1-0

(Now return to page 111.)

Exercise 55



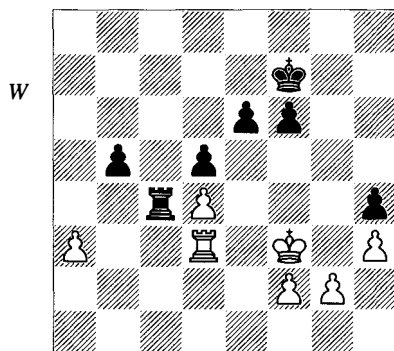
There followed:

24...♖e1+ 25 ♖e1 ♜e2! 0-1

Faced with loss of material, White could only resign at once.

(Now return to page 112.)

Exercise 56

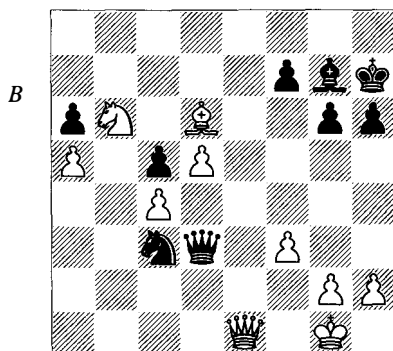


The correct choice was 39 ♖e3 followed by ♜b3, attacking the pawn on b5 and retaining chances of equalizing.

In the game White played 39 ♖g4?, and after 39...e5 40 ♖xh4 (40 ♖f5 is answered by 40...♜xd4 41 ♜xd4 exd4 42 ♖f4 f5 and the king and pawn ending is lost for White) 40...♜xd4+ 41 ♜xd4 exd4 42 ♖g4 d3 43 ♖f3 d4! 0-1 he had to resign in view of the inescapable zugzwang.

(Now return to page 113.)

Exercise 57



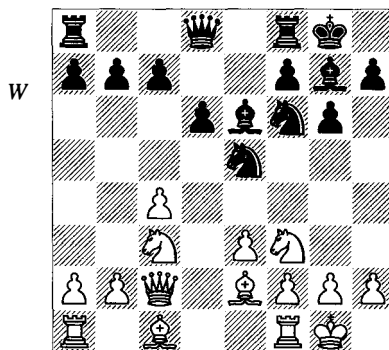
In the game, there followed:

37...♖e2+ 38 ♖h1 ♜c3! 0-1

Quite unexpectedly, the white queen turns out to be snared and perishes. White therefore immediately resigned.

(Now return to page 113.)

Exercise 58



Makarychev didn't believe his opponent's pawn sacrifice, and accepted it. The continuation was:

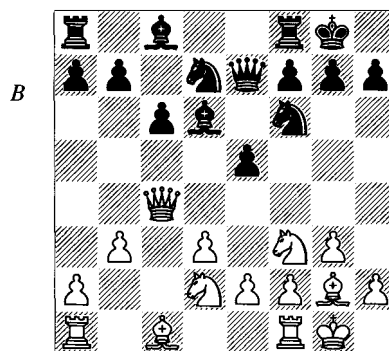
10 ♖d4?! ♜xc4! 11 f4?

It wasn't too late to back out by playing 11 ♜xc4 ♖xc4 12 ♖cb5 a6 13 ♜xc4 axb5 14 ♜xb5, though even then Black's position is preferable.

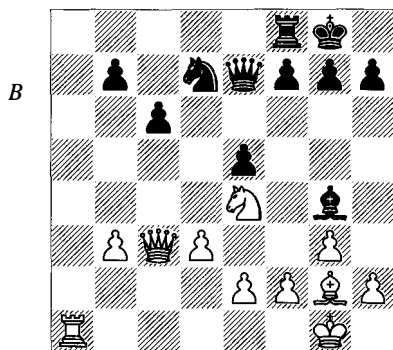
11...♜xe2 12 fxe5 ♜xf1 13 exf6 ♜xf6 14 ♖e4 ♜e7! 15 ♖xf1 ♜xd4 16 exd4 ♜fe8 0-1

(Now return to page 114.)

Exercise 59



A line that might suggest itself is 10...♜e8, followed by bringing the knight from d7 to f8. But what then? The queen's bishop has to be developed. Where to? To g4? But after that, what is Black to do with the knight on f8? In any case, White's strategic threat – ♜c2 and ♖c4, as already indicated – is looking much more dangerous. Black may of course play 10...♜e8 and see what happens: if 11 ♜c2 then 11...♖b6, provisionally neutralizing White's threat (12 ♖c4 ♖xc4). But a strong player



Do you see what White has overlooked?

Believe it or not, I had analysed this very position when calculating the variations at move 16. Of course 22...♙xe2? (the trap White has been preparing) would be bad here in view of 23 f3! f5 24 ♖f2 ♜c5? (24...f4 25 g4 e4 is necessary, but Black is fighting for equality rather than an advantage) 25 ♜d2, and the bishop perishes.

But unexpectedly for Stopkin, there followed: 22...f5!

Now after 23 ♖d2, Black *can* take the pawn: 23...♙xe2 24 f3? ♜c5+ (or 24...♜d6!?).

However, White composed himself and quickly replied:

23 ♜c4+?

And yet this is just the moment when he ought not to have rushed. After one oversight, further blunders may ensue – which is just what happens in this game. Fortunately, my opponent wasn't familiar with my theory of 'serial errors'.

The least of the various evils was 23 f3. Then after 23...fxe4 (23...♙h5 is also good) 24 fxg4 exd3 25 exd3 (25 ♜xd3 ♜c5+ 26 ♙h1 ♖f6) 25...♜c5+ 26 ♜xc5 ♖xc5, White would retain some saving chances.

23...♙h8

White realized only now that on the planned reply 24 ♖c3, his queen would be caught by 24...♖b6!. He had to resign himself to losing a pawn:

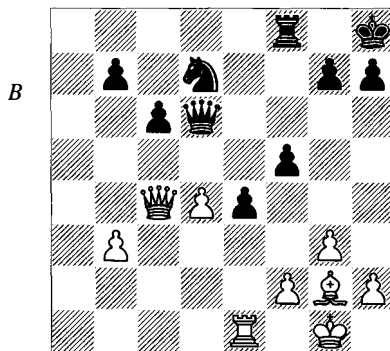
24 ♖d2 ♙xe2 25 ♜e1 ♙h5 26 d4?!

Although White's position is hopeless and 'anything goes', he should nonetheless have refrained from this impulsive move.

26...♜d6! 27 ♖f3 ♙xf3 28 ♙xf3 e4

I could have picked up a second pawn by 28...♜xd4 29 ♜xd4 exd4 30 ♜e7 ♜d8, but with a material plus and a position that was definitely won, I wanted to play a little more safely – especially since after 30 ♜d1 (instead of 30 ♜e7) some distinct technical difficulties could arise for Black.

29 ♙g2 (D)



Some elementary prophylactic thinking suggests that White's plans (especially considering his present emotional state) involve undermining the e4-pawn by f3.

This continuation didn't frighten me, far from it – I wanted this pawn-break, which weakens White's king position, to be carried out.

For that reason, instead of 29...♖f6 (fortifying the e4-point), I played an 'inoffensive' move:

29...♜d8 30 f3?! ♖f6 31 fxe4 fxe4

Now (as at move 24), White perceived the truth too late: the intended 32 ♙xe4 is not met by 32...♜xd4+ 33 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 34 ♙g2 with drawing chances, but by 32...♜e8! 33 ♜d3 ♜e7, winning a piece.

So we see that a trap can be employed successfully in a won position too, provided of course that it fits in with the plan we are pursuing.

The remaining moves of the game were:

32 ♜d1 h6!? 33 ♜f7 ♜b4 34 ♙h3

This attempt to work up some activity at any cost merely hastens the end.

34...♜c3 35 ♜c7 ♜e3+ 36 ♙f1 ♜f8 0-1

(Now return to page 119.)

5 Opposite Bishops in the Middlegame

Nothing is simpler than the game of chess. All you have to learn is how to solve the problem of the three 'W's' correctly: Which piece to place on Which square, and When.

When there are no pieces on the board other than opposite-coloured bishops and pawns, the weaker side should as a rule defend passively, seeking to construct a fortress on the colour squares that the enemy bishop cannot attack.

In the middlegame, in the majority of cases, the presence of opposite bishops makes the defender's task harder. This is because he lacks the chance to eliminate or exchange his opponent's bishop, which participates actively – together with other pieces – in the attack on the squares opposite to the defending bishop's colour.

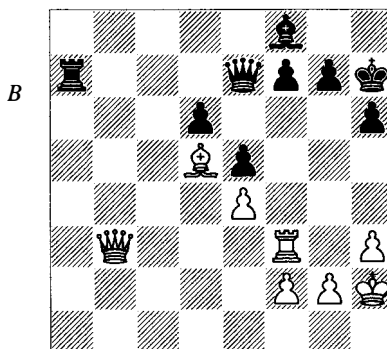
In a middlegame with opposite bishops it is imperative to seize the initiative at almost any cost and compel your opponent to go over to defence.

It is important to observe that the advantage in an opposite-bishop middlegame is of a long-term static character, since the weaker side (as we have said) doesn't have the chance to exchange bishops. This is why even a stubborn defence will often prove susceptible to inaccuracies and errors.

Bishop Power

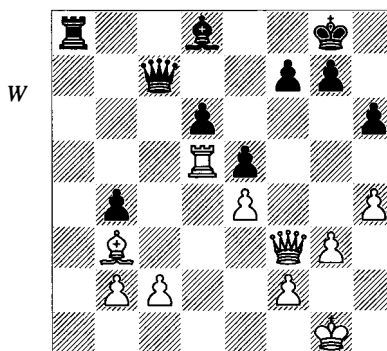
In a middlegame with opposite-coloured bishops, the chief factor determining the assessment of the position is the activity of the bishops. In most cases the advantage belongs to the player whose bishop is stronger.

In support of this, let us examine some examples of a standard type of position with a backward pawn.



Kasparov – Karpov
World Ch match (game 6),
New York/Lyons 1990

Exercise 60: Choose between the candidate moves 36...f6 and 36...g8.
(For the answer, see page 149.)



Razuvaev – Sigurjonsson
Cienfuegos 1975

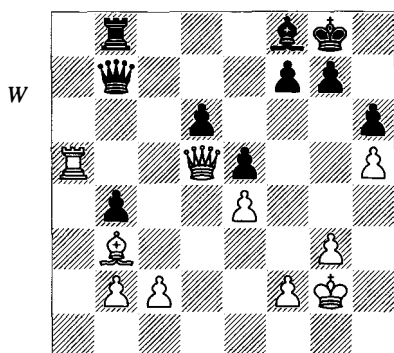
This position can be assessed as strategically won for White because, thanks to the opposite bishops, he has the more active pieces and practically an extra pawn.

28 ♖g2 ♜b8 29 h5! ♙g5 30 ♔d3 ♜b6

30...♗e7 is a more stubborn defence, although even then, after 31 ♖a6, White will gradually achieve the same set-up as in the game.

31 ♖a5 ♜b8 32 ♖a6 ♗e7 33 ♖d5 ♗f8 34 ♖a4 ♖d7 35 ♖a5 ♖b7 (D)

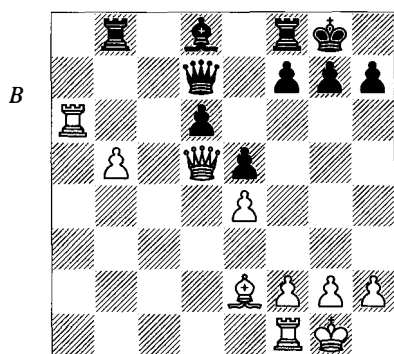
This loses, but 35...♗c7 36 ♖a6! ♖d7 37 ♖a5 would have the same consequences.



36 ♖xb7 ♜xb7 37 ♗d5 ♜c7 38 ♖b5 ♜xc2 39 ♖xb4 ♜c7 40 ♖b8 ♖a7 41 b4 1-0

True, in positions of this kind the stronger side doesn't always achieve the win so easily.

In this game, in contrast to the two preceding positions, Black was able to draw quickly and easily.

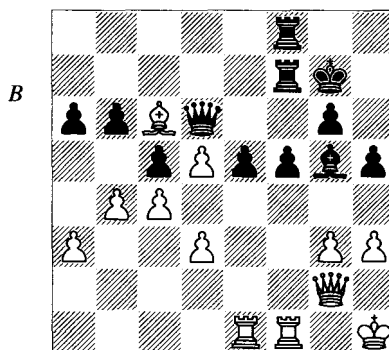


Kapengut – Timoshchenko
USSR Ch First League, Ashkhabad 1978

Exercise 61: What helped him to do this?
(For the answer, see page 149.)

In the 'middlegame with opposite bishops' category there are naturally many other positions where the fate of the game depends on

whether the problem of activating the bishop can be solved.



Spassky – Simagin
USSR Ch, Moscow 1961

It may look as if White's position is quite acceptable: the protected passed pawn on d5 gives his light-squared bishop a secure post. This might indeed be the case, were it not for the main strategic factor in the position – opposite bishops in the middlegame. In fact, White's 'beautiful' bishop is completely useless. For this reason, once Black has solved the problem of activating his own bishop, the outcome of the game is a foregone conclusion.

36...♗d8!

Planning ...♗c7 and ...cxb4.

37 bxc5 bxc5 38 ♖b1?

A very superficial decision, based on a weak prognosis of how the game will go. The white rook may be on the only open file, but on the queenside there is nothing to do – everything has to be decided on the kingside.

38...♗c7 39 ♗a4 e4! 40 dxe4 fxe4 41 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 42 ♗d1

Simagin gives the variation 42 ♖xe4 ♖xg3 43 ♖g2 ♖e3! 44 ♗g1 ♗h8 (threatening 45...♖f2) 45 ♖f1 ♖xf1+ 46 ♖xf1 ♗g7 47 ♗d7 ♖d2! 48 ♖g1 ♖e2 and Black wins.

42...e3

The threat is 43...♖f2.

43 ♗f3 h4! 44 ♖f1

If 44 g4 or 44 gxh4, then 44...♖xf3.

44...hxc3 45 ♖e2 ♖e5 46 ♗g2 ♗a5 47 ♖b1 ♗h6?!

The immediate 47...♖xf3! is more incisive, as Black wins after 48 ♗xf3 ♖f5+ or 48 ♖xf3 e2.

48 ♖b3?!

White should try 48 d6, though his chances are hardly attractive, of course.

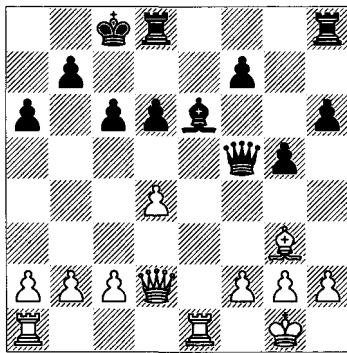
48...♙d2 49 ♖b6 ♖xf3 50 ♖e6

If 50 ♖xf3 then 50...♖h5+, while 50 ♖xf3 loses to 50...e2 51 ♖f8+ ♙g5 52 ♖d8+ ♙h5.

50...♖xe6 51 dxe6 ♖f2+ 52 ♖xg3

Alternatively, 52 ♖xf2 gxf2 and now 53 ♙f1 ♙g7 or 53 e7 e2.

52...♖xe2 53 e7 ♖g2+! 54 ♖xg2 e2 55 e8 ♖e1 ♖ 56 ♖f8+ ♙h5 57 ♖xc5+ ♙g5 0-1



Yudasin – Sagalchik
Kemerovo 1995

If Black's pawn were on c7 instead of c6, his chances would be no worse.

16 ♖b4!

The difference in activity between the bishops already begins to tell. Now on 16...♖b5 White would have the pleasant choice between going into an ending with an extra pawn (17 ♙xd6 ♖xb4 18 ♙xb4, when 18...♖xd4?? is impossible due to 19 ♙c3), and keeping the queens on with 17 ♖a3!.

16...♖d5 17 b3 h5

White could answer 17...f5 with 18 f4, leaving the black bishop deprived of its support. An even stronger answer would be 18 c4! ♖xd4 19 ♖ad1 ♖c5 20 ♖d2.

18 ♖ad1! b5

After 18...c5 19 dxc5 ♖xc5 20 ♖d2 White's advantage is near-decisive.

19 ♖a3 ♙c7

The variation 19...h4 20 c4! (20 ♖xa6+!? forces 20...♙d7, when 21 c4 bxc4 22 bxc4 ♖xc4 23 ♖a7+ ♙e8 24 d5 may give White no more than a draw, but 21 ♙e5!? poses Black

more enduring problems) 20...bxc4 21 bxc4 ♖xc4 22 ♙xd6 ♖xa2 23 ♖c5 ♖d5 24 ♖a7! ♖xd6 25 ♖b1 would suit White perfectly.

20 c4

Not 20 ♖xa6?? ♖a8.

20...bxc4 21 bxc4 ♖xc4 22 d5! ♙xd5

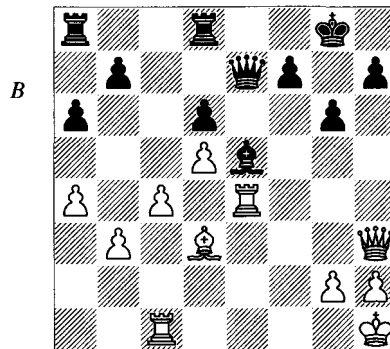
22...cxd5 is met by 23 ♖c1.

23 ♖e7+ ♙c8 24 ♙xd6 ♖d7 25 ♖b2 ♖xe7 26 ♖b8+ 1-0

On 26...♙d7 White plays 27 ♖c7+ ♙e6 28 ♖xe7+ ♙f5 29 ♖e5+ ♙g6 30 ♖xh8.

Of course, the terms 'good bishop' and 'bad bishop' are applicable to opposite-bishop midlegames just as they are to other positions. Here, it is true, these concepts are endowed with a different sense.

"The main thing for the bishop is its prospect of participating in an attack. This factor often has a decisive bearing on the evaluation of the position." (Dvoretsky).



Prasad – Sax
Interzonal tournament, Subotica 1987

The difference in activity between the bishops is perceptible. This indeed decides the outcome.

25...f5! 26 ♖e2 ♖ac8!

Bringing his last reserves into play and preventing c5.

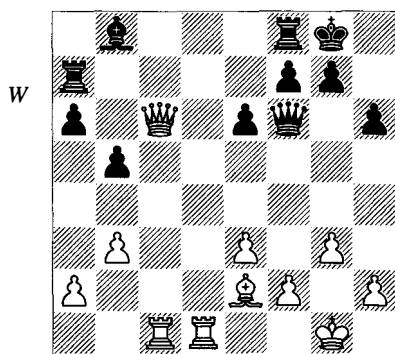
27 ♖f1?!

White displays a weak sense of danger. His poor anticipation of events means that he loses control over them. He had to resolve on the radical continuation 27 g4.

27...♖f8 28 ♖h6 ♖ce8 29 ♖fe1 ♖c7 30 ♖h3 ♙g7 31 ♙b1 ♖c5! 32 ♖f3 ♖d4 33 ♖d3 ♖h4 34 g3 ♖h5 35 c5

White's queenside initiative clearly lags behind; Black has already achieved too much on the kingside.

35...f4! 36 gxf4 ♖xf4 37 ♖g2 ♜h4 38 ♜ee2 ♙xh2! 39 ♜xh2 ♜xe2 0-1



Kasparov – H. Olafsson
Dubai Olympiad 1986

From the standpoint of 'classical' criteria, Black's bishop in this position cannot be called 'bad'. Yet in the context of the opposite-bishop middlegame it is nothing but an idler. Furthermore, Black's pieces have completely lost their coordination, while they are faced with the maximum activity of all their white counterparts.

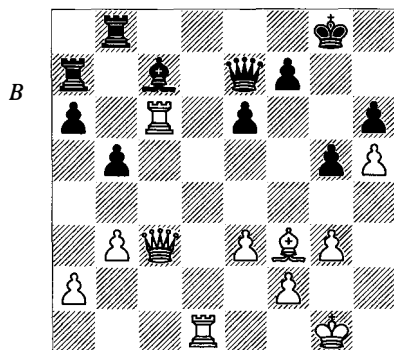
26 ♖b6! ♜e7 27 ♜c6 ♙e5 28 ♙f3 ♜b8 29 ♜a5!

Attacking the a6-pawn.

29...♙c7 30 ♜c3

The coordination of Black's pieces is not improving!

30...♜b6 31 h4! g6 32 ♜c5 ♜b8 33 h5 g5 34 ♜c6 (D)



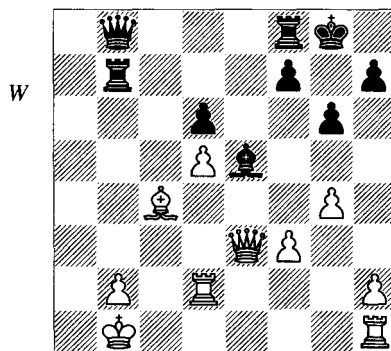
34...♙b6

Black wasn't able to solve his problems with 34...♜b6 in view of the total paralysis of the rook on a7.

35 ♙g2 b4 36 ♜e5 ♜c7 37 ♜dd6 ♜xc6 38 ♜xc6 ♜d8 39 ♙g4 ♜b7

With 39...♜d5+ 40 ♜xd5 exd5 41 ♜xh6 Black loses material without solving any of his problems.

40 ♙xe6 fxe6 41 ♜xe6+ 1-0



Kamsky – Kasparov
Manila Olympiad 1992

Black's advantage is decisive on account of his more active bishop and the possibility of launching a mating attack against White's weakened king position. Add to this the fact that White's bishop cannot help in the defence of the dark squares, and Kasparov's attack is bound to succeed.

31 ♜e2

Or 31 b3 ♜c8 32 ♙c2 ♜xc4+ 33 bxc4 ♜b2+ and the attack breaks through.

31...♜a7 32 ♜c1 ♜a8 33 b3

Now the dark squares in White's camp become hopelessly weak, but there was already no defence.

33...♙f4 34 ♙c2 ♜e7 35 ♜d3 ♜c5 36 ♜b1 ♜e3 37 ♜d4 ♜a2+ 38 ♙d1

Or 38 ♜b2 ♜xb2+ 39 ♜xb2 ♙e5 40 ♜a2 ♜c3+.

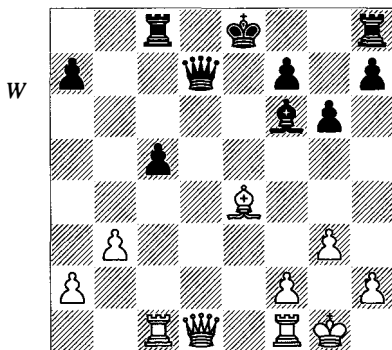
38...♜xf3

An even stronger line is 38...♜e8 39 ♜d3 ♜b4 40 ♜c3 ♜xc3 41 ♜xc3 ♜d2+ 42 ♙c1 ♜e1#, but this makes no difference to the result of the game.

39 ♜xf4 ♜xf4 40 ♜xa2 ♜g1+ 41 ♙c2 ♜xh2+ 0-1

The Initiative

"In a middlegame with opposite bishops, it is most important to seize the initiative at any cost and compel the opponent to defend." (Dvoretsky).



Yusupov – A. Sokolov
Candidates match (game 4),
Riga 1986

With opposite bishops and Black's king exposed, White must seek to take the initiative immediately, while Black needs to evacuate his king or else secure a fair share of the initiative himself. As 20 ♖f3 ♗d4 21 ♗b7 ♖c7 22 ♗fel+ ♗f8 promises White no advantage, he sharpens the play, and an interesting battle ensues:

20 b4!? cxb4

The variation 20...♗xd1?! 21 ♗fxd1 c4 22 b5 0-0 23 ♗d7 is wholly to White's liking.

21 ♗xc8+ ♖xc8 22 ♗d6 ♗e7 23 ♗e5 ♖c3! 24 ♗b8+ ♗d8 25 ♗c6+

On 25 ♗d1 Black has 25...0-0!.

25...♗e7!

Not 25...♗xc6? 26 ♗e5+.

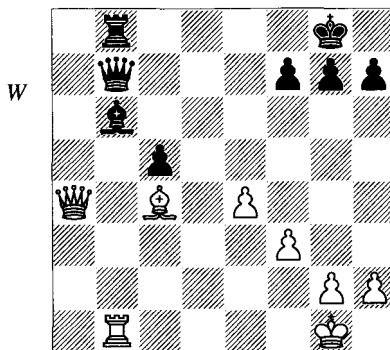
26 ♗d1 ♗f6! 27 ♗a4

If 27 ♗xd8 then 27...♗c1+.

27...♗g7! 28 ♗xa7

Or 28 ♗xd8 ♗el+ 29 ♗g2 ♗e4+ 30 f3 ♗e2+ 31 ♗h3 ♗f1+ and now 32 ♗h4 ♗c4+ repeats because White must avoid 33 g4? ♗xd8 34 ♗xd8 ♗f4!. Note that after 32 ♗g4? h5+!, Black has all the winning chances.

28...♗f6 29 ♗d4 ♗e7 30 ♗xf6+ ♗xf6 31 ♗d7 ♗d8 32 ♗b7 h5 33 h4 ♗d2 34 ♗b3 ♗e2 35 ♗f1 ♗e5 36 ♗c7 ♗c5 37 ♗d7 ♗e5 38 ♗d5 ♗g7 39 ♗b3 ♗f8 40 ♗b7 ♗e4 41 ♗c7 1/2-1/2



Boleslavsky – Sterner
Sweden – USSR match, Stockholm 1954

The considerable difference in the activity of the pieces, especially the opposite bishops, means that White's position is definitely preferable. The only question is whether his advantage is sufficient to win.

38 ♗d1 ♗c7 39 ♗d7 ♗f8 40 e5 ♗b6?

In time-trouble, on the last move before the control, Black commits what the subsequent events will show to be a very significant error, leading to the loss of a most important tempo. After the correct 40...♗b8! 41 f4 ♗a5, followed by bringing the bishop via c3 to d4, Black should not lose.

41 f4 ♗b8 42 h4!

To quote Boleslavsky: "With the participation of this modest pawn, the attack on the king becomes irresistible."

42...♗a5

Or 42...g6 43 e6 fxe6 44 f5! ♗d8 (44...gxf5 45 ♗xe6+ ♗h8 46 ♗xf5 ♗xf5 47 ♗xf5) 45 ♗xe6+ ♗g7 46 f6+ ♗h8 (46...♗h6 47 ♗xd8) 47 ♗f1!? (or 47 ♗d7!) 47...♗b2 48 ♗e7 ♗d4+ 49 ♗f2 ♗a1+ 50 ♗f1 ♗g8 51 f7.

43 h5 ♗c3?!

The most stubborn line is 43...♗b4 44 e6, and now:

a) 44...fxe6 45 ♗xe6+ ♗h8 46 ♗e7 ♗b8 (46...♗b8 47 h6 ♗c3 48 ♗d7 ♗d4+ 49 ♗xd4) 47 h6 ♗c3 48 ♗d7 ♗b1+ (48...♗c1+ 49 ♗f1) 49 ♗h2 ♗h1+ 50 ♗xh1 ♗c1+ 51 ♗h2 ♗xf4+ 52 ♗gl ♗c1+ 53 ♗f1 and White wins.

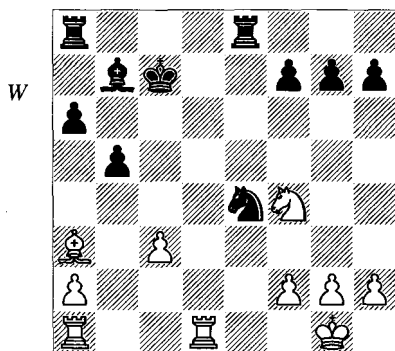
b) 44...♗xc4 45 e7 ♗e6 46 exf8 ♗+ ♗xf8 47 ♗a7! (better than 47 ♗xe6) 47...♗b6 (47...♗b6 48 ♗a8+ ♗e7 49 ♗a1!) 48 ♗b8+ ♗e7 49 ♗b1 ♗d8 50 ♗a7+ and again White wins.

44 ♗d6! ♗b1+

“Or 44...h6 45 ♖f5, with threats of 46 ♔d3 or 46 ♖xh6.”

45 ♖h2 h6 46 ♖xf7+! ♖xf7 47 ♖d8+ ♔h7 48 ♔xf7 1-0

This is bound to remind us that some people call chess ‘a tragedy of one tempo’.



Karpov – Tal
Bugojno 1980

Although the queens are no longer on the board, there are still plenty of pieces left, and the main point is that in these middlegame conditions, the presence of opposite bishops makes the black king’s position most uncomfortable.

22 f3 ♘f6 23 ♔d6+ ♔b6 24 c4! ♖ac8

It was worth considering 24...♖ad8, aiming subsequently to reduce White’s attacking potential by exchanges.

25 cxb5 axb5 26 a4! ♖cd8 27 axb5 ♖d7 28 ♖d4! ♖ed8 29 ♖ad1 ♖c8

After 29...g5? 30 ♔e7! ♖xd4 31 ♔xd8+ ♔c5 32 ♖xd4 ♔xd4 33 ♔xf6+, White wins.

30 ♔e5 ♖e7

The endgame after 30...♖xd4 31 ♔xd4+ ♔xb5 32 ♔xf6 gxf6 33 ♖d7 is hopeless for Black.

31 ♖d6+ ♔xb5 32 ♖b1+ ♔c4

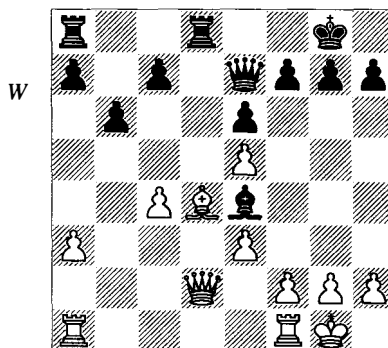
Other moves also lose: 32...♔a5 33 ♖d2 ♖c4 34 ♖a2+ ♖a4 35 ♔c3+ or 32...♔c5 33 ♔d3+ ♔c4 34 ♖b4#.

33 ♖d4+ ♔c5

Or 33...♔c3 34 ♖d3+ ♔c2 35 ♖b2+ ♔c1 36 ♔e2#.

34 ♔d3+ 1-0

The presence of major pieces on the board favours the stronger side.



Vikulov – Dvoretsky
Moscow 1971

Black’s advantage lies in his superior pawn-structure and chances to seize the open file.

19 f3 ♔b7 20 ♖c2 c5 21 ♔c3 ♖d7 22 a4?!

With opposite bishops in the middlegame, it is most effective to play on the side of the board where the kings reside.

A better option is therefore 22 ♖fd1 ♖ad8 23 ♖xd7 ♖xd7, although in that case too Black’s advantage is quite noticeable.

22...♖ad8 23 a5 ♖g5 24 ♖ae1

Not 24 f4? ♖d2.

24...♖d3 25 axb6 axb6 26 ♖b2

26 ♔d4? is strongly met by 26...♖8xd4 27 exd4 ♖d2.

26...♔a8

26...♖8d7! is better.

27 h3 h5 28 ♖c2 ♔b7 29 ♖e2 ♖8d7 30 ♔h1

Or 30 ♖b2 ♔a6.

30...♔a6 31 ♖a4

31 ♔b2 can be answered with the simple 31...♖xe3.

31...♖xc3 32 ♖xa6

Or 32 ♖xd7 ♔xc4.

32...♖d8 33 ♖a1

A good answer to 33 ♔h2 is 33...h4 followed by 34...♖d1 or 34...♖d2.

33...♖xc4 34 ♖a2 ♖g5 35 ♖a8+ ♔h7 36 ♖b1+ ♖g6 37 g4

If 37 ♖xb6, then 37...♖c2 38 ♖g1 ♖d1.

37...hxg4 38 hxg4?!

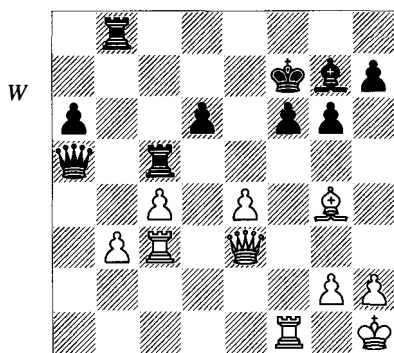
Exchanging queens was more stubborn.

38...♖c2 39 ♔g1 ♖dd2 0-1

(Notes based on comments by Dvoretsky.)

In middlegame positions with opposite bishops, you must endeavour to seize the initiative

at all costs. Possession of the initiative in such positions is a serious asset. Hence the initiative is worth more than pawns!



Beliaevsky – Cebalo
Slovenian Team Ch, Bled 1998

White's advantage is obvious. But in order to develop an initiative, you have to attack your opponent's weaknesses. Where are they?

The first one is the pawn on d6.

24 Rxd3 Qb6

Perhaps 24...Rd8 first is better.

25 Qd2 Rd8 26 b4!

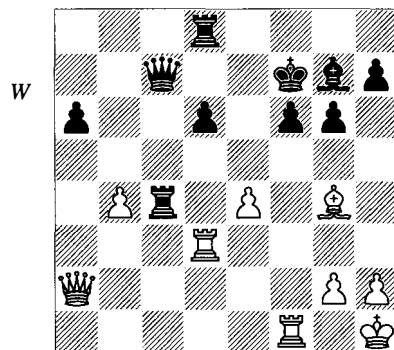
The initiative has to be paid for!

26...Rxc4

Declining the pawn sacrifice also turns out badly: 26...Rc6 27 c5 Qb8 28 Qa2+ Qf8 29 Qe6 with a very strong attack.

27 Qa2 Qc7 (D)

Black also loses with 27...Qxb4 28 Qe2! d5 29 Rxd5.

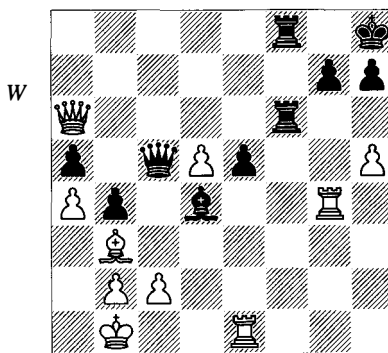


Now on 28 Rxd4? he was intending 28...d5.

28 Qe6+!!

But here is the second weakness, the second object of attack! It is the black king.

28...Qxe6 29 Rxd4 Qe7 30 Rxc4 Qb7 31 Rfc1 Rd7 32 Rxc8 1-0



Ghinda – Kindermann
Thessaloniki Olympiad 1984

The evaluation of the position seems unclear at first, until you hit on the idea of a pawn sacrifice bringing the light-squared bishop to life.

37 d6!? Rxd6?!

Not 37...Qxd6?? 38 Qb7 g6 39 h6. Black's most resilient reply is 37...Rb8, simply preventing Qb7 and challenging White to find another productive course of action.

38 Qb7 e4

Or 38...Qa7 39 Rxc7.

39 Rxe4 Qxh5

On 39...Qf6? White has 40 Qf7! (not 40 Qe8? Qd1+!) 40...Rdd8 41 Qe8, winning; if 39...Rdd8 then 40 h6.

40 Qe7 Rdd8 41 Rb4

But not 41 Rxd4? Qde8 42 Rf4 Rg8!.

41...Qf5

White wins after 41...Qc5? 42 Rb1 Qf1+ 43 Qa2 or 41...Qg6? 42 Rxd4 Qde8 43 Qh4.

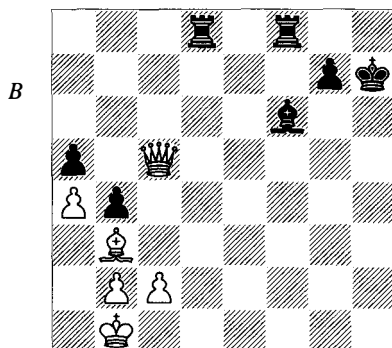
42 Rb1 Qf6

42...Qfe8? 43 Rxd4 or 42...Qde8? 43 Rb7+ Qxh7 44 Rb7+ Qxh7 45 Qh4+ and Qxd4.

43 Rb7+ Qxh7 44 Rb7+ Qxh7 45 Qc5! (D)

After the exchange of two rooks for the queen, White's attack still continues.

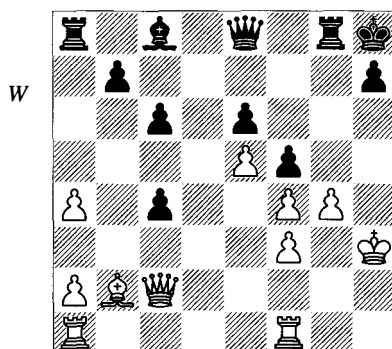
In the middlegame (and a game still has strong middlegame characteristics if the queen has a minor piece on its side and there are two rooks and a minor piece opposing it), the queen nearly always proves stronger than two rooks, as it is more mobile.



45...g6 46 ♖xa5 ♜d4 47 ♜c7+ ♔h6 48 ♔a2
g5 49 ♔c4! g4 50 ♔d3 ♔g7 51 ♜e7! ♜f6 52
♜e3+

White could also play 52 ♜e1 ♔g5 53 ♜e5+.

52...♜df4 53 a5 ♜f8 54 ♜e6+ ♜8f6 55 ♜g8
♜f7 56 a6 ♔g5 57 ♜d8+ ♔h5 58 ♜a5+ 1-0



Simagin – Chistiakov
Moscow 1946

“The position is so sharp that the black pawn is a triviality, and it isn’t worth wasting time capturing it.” (Vladimir Simagin).

26 ♜f2! c3!

The initiative is more important than a pawn!

27 ♔xc3 ♜xa4

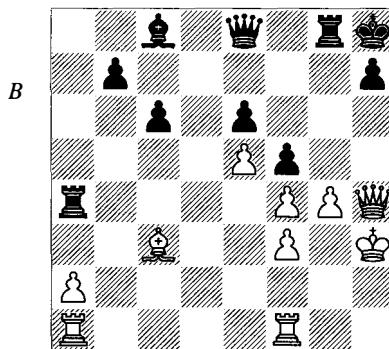
Attacking the f4-pawn.

28 ♜h4! (D)

Intending ♜f6+ or ♔g3.

In chaotic situations your calculations should be conducted ‘not in depth but in breadth’. That is, it is most important to check for all candidate moves and the likely responses to them, as the chance of missing a devastating blow is high in a wild position rife with paradoxical ideas and ‘random’ tactics. If you are sure you have

identified the truly critical lines, then by all means analyse them more deeply. And once you have done this, check if you have uncovered any useful ideas or tactical themes that may affect the evaluation of earlier branches of your tree of analysis or suggest completely new candidate moves.



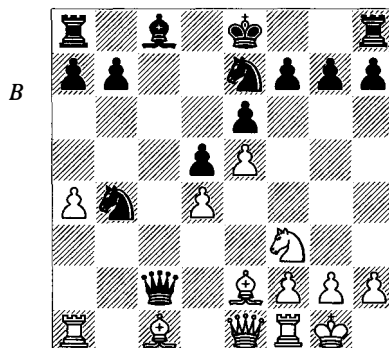
Exercise 62: What would you play for Black in this position?

(For the answer, see page 150.)

What is completely unacceptable is a case where we ourselves – in pursuit of material gains – offer our opponent the chance to seize the initiative in an opposite-bishop middlegame.

Klovans – Kosikov
Tbilisi 1974

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♔b4 4 e5 c5 5 a3
♔xc3+ 6 bxc3 ♘e7 7 ♘f3 ♜c7 8 a4 ♔bc6 9
♔e2 cxd4 10 cxd4 ♘b4 11 0-0 ♜xc2 12 ♜e1
(D)



An opening line that made its first tournament appearance in the present game. And, as

so often, it was a case of ‘if at first you don’t succeed...’

Black’s strategy may seem utterly anti-positional, a typical case of pawn-grabbing. The result of the game, in which Black is completely crushed, may look only too natural.

Yet I am firmly convinced that this is merely a one-sided, superficial view. The position is of the closed type, which means that a slight backwardness in development is not so significant. In return for it, Black’s formation is very solid. And indeed the extra pawn, which can be used to bail Black out should the need arise, is not to be scorned.

This was in fact confirmed two years later, in a game that took place – as if specially ordered – between the same players, in the first round of the USSR Championship elimination tournament at Beltsy 1976. This time, from the diagram position, Black played correctly. With 12...a5! 13 ♖a3 ♕d7 14 ♕d1 ♜c7 15 ♕xb4 axb4 16 ♜xb4 I immediately returned the pawn, thereby solving my basic opening problems. Having succeeded in equalizing the chances, I went on to achieve victory after a tense positional struggle.

In our first game it emerged that the opening novelty was still in a ‘raw’ state, and I suffered a defeat which, though painful, was highly instructive.

12...♕d3?

I am now convinced that this move loses the game. At the time I felt that it was possible to suffer for a while in return for the pawn. I didn’t reflect that I was entering a middlegame with opposite bishops, in which passivity is not tolerated...

13 ♕xd3 ♜xd3 14 ♕a3 ♕c6 15 ♜c1!

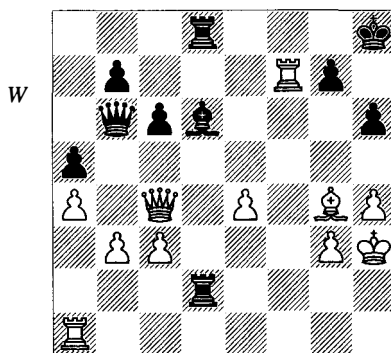
What can I say when there is nothing to be said? The overwhelming difference in the activity of the bishops, the advantage in space, the chronic ‘incurable’ malady of the black king, the supreme activity of the white pieces as against the passive uncoordinated state of their black counterparts – all this has cost White just one pawn. Of course it would still be possible to debate the strength of some of Black’s moves in the remainder of the game. But these are vain arguments – the upshot is clear. I shall therefore give the fairly brief conclusion of the game without adding any notes.

15...f6 16 ♖e1 ♜f7 17 exf6 gxf6 18 ♜f4 h6 19 ♖e3 ♜h7 20 ♕e5+ ♕xe5 21 dxe5 f5 22 ♜h4 ♕e8 23 ♜f6 ♜g8 24 ♖g3 1-0

Notably, Black has an extra pawn even in the final position. Only it was no use to him in the game.

Attacking the King

An attack on the opponent’s king is the ideal form that the initiative can take.

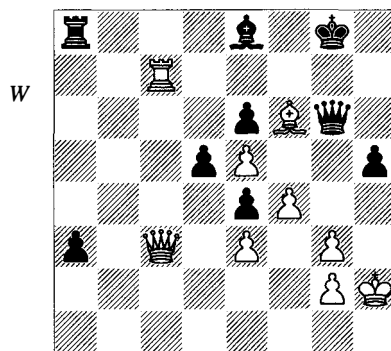


Aronian – Rozentalis

FIDE Knockout, Las Vegas 1999

Exercise 63: What would you play in White’s place?

(For the answer, see page 150.)



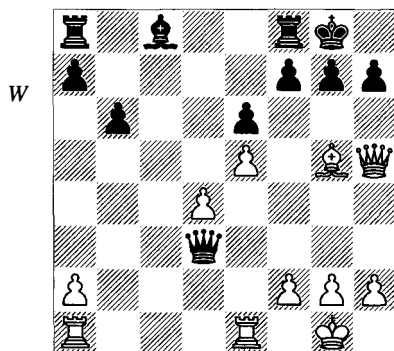
Villamayor – Wang Lei

Quezon City 2000

Exercise 64: What would you play here for White?

(For the answer, see page 151.)

"The correct strategy with opposite-coloured bishops is to attack the king. Material or positional gains are worth little if the king is in danger. Any opportunity to play for the attack must be taken." (Dvoretsky).

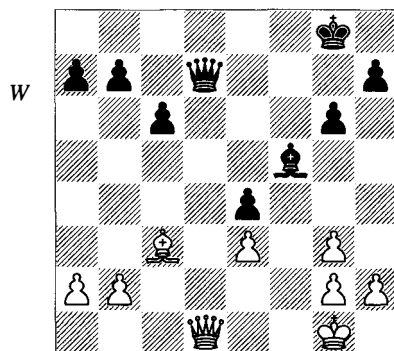


Klovans – Vitoliņš
Riga 1964

Exercise 65: Give your evaluation of the position.

(For the answer, see page 151.)

With queens on the board, the stronger side very often succeeds in working up an attack on the opponent's king. In these circumstances the position of the attacker's own king is of great importance.



Seirawan – Tal
Candidates tournament, Montpellier 1985

27 ♖e1! ♙e6 28 b3 c5 29 h3! b5 30 ♖f1! b4 31 ♙e5

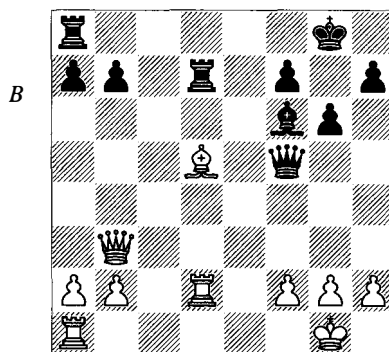
Threatening ♖f6.

31... ♗d8 32 ♗b5 ♗c8 33 ♙h2 ♙d5 34 ♙d6 a6 35 ♗a5!

The pawn won't run away, while the queens have to be retained. The continuation 35 ♖xc5? ♗xc5 36 ♙xc5 a5 37 ♙b6 a4 would lead immediately to a draw.

35... ♙f7 36 ♙xc5 ♗c6 37 ♖xb4 ♙e6 38 ♙d4 h5 39 ♗b8 ♙e7 40 ♗e5 ♗d5 41 ♖f6+ 1-0

Then again, it is often essential to provoke the opponent into weakening *his* king position.



Bobotsov – Keres
Beverwijk 1964

At the moment White is threatening ♙e6. Therefore:

21... ♗e8!? 22 g3?

Renewing the threat. However, the correct continuation was 22 ♙e6 ♗de7! 23 ♙c4 ♗e1+ 24 ♗xe1 ♗xe1+ 25 ♙f1 ♗b1 26 ♗c4 (threatening ♗d7) 26... ♙xb2 27 ♗d7 ♗f5 28 ♗xb7 with complete equality.

22... ♙g5! 23 f4

Either 23 ♙e6 ♗xe6 24 ♗xd7 ♗e2! or 23 ♗d3 ♗e2 24 ♗f1 ♙f6! would be bad for White.

23... ♙d8! 24 ♗ad1 ♙a5! 25 ♗d3

After 25 ♗c2 ♗ed8 White loses a piece.

25... ♗e2 26 ♙f3 ♙b6+ 27 ♖xb6

If 27 ♙f1 then 27... ♗h3+ 28 ♙xe2 ♗xh2+, mating; on 27 ♙h1 Black plays 27... ♗xd3 28 ♗xd3 (28 ♗xd3 ♗e1+ 29 ♙g2 ♗gl#) 28... ♗e1+ 29 ♙g2 ♗gl+ and wins.

27... ♗xd3!

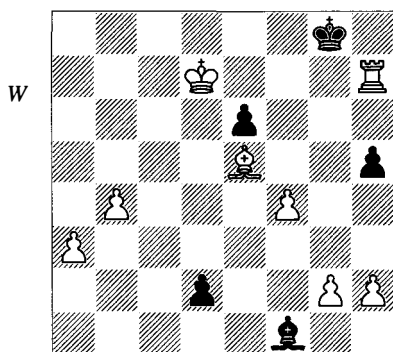
The less incisive 27... ♙xb6 28 ♙xe2 leaves Black with a little more work to do.

28 ♗d8+ ♗xd8 29 ♗xd8+ ♙g7 30 ♙xe2 ♗e6 31 ♙f1 ♗xa2 32 ♗d2 ♗a5 33 ♙e1 ♗c5 34 ♙f1 a5 35 ♙e2 b5 36 ♙d1 a4 37 ♙d3 b4 38 ♙b1 ♗g1+ 0-1

Attacking the King with Minimal Material

We shall not be speaking of endgames with opposite bishops and no other pieces. The addition of one or two other pieces, especially queens, to the opposite-coloured bishops on each side is enough to give the position the character of a middlegame; then everything we have said about opposite bishops will apply here too, even with the scant quantity of pieces and pawns.

Here are a few examples on this theme.



Benjamin – A. Friedman
St Martin 1993

Despite the small quantity of pieces on the board, the position has the sharp, dynamic, combinative qualities of a middlegame, where the calculation of variations is at a premium.

50 ♖h6!! ♕f7

Other continuations don't save him either:
50...d1 ♖+ 51 ♕e7; 50...♙d3 51 ♕e7 ♙h7 52 ♜f6 ♙d3 53 f5! ♙xf5 (53...d1 ♖ 54 ♜f8+ ♕h7 55 ♜h8#) 54 ♜f8+ ♕h7 55 ♜d8.

51 ♜f6+ ♕g8 52 ♕e7 ♕h7

Or 52...d1 ♖ 53 ♜h6.

53 ♜f7+

53 f5 also wins.

53...♕g6 54 f5+ exf5

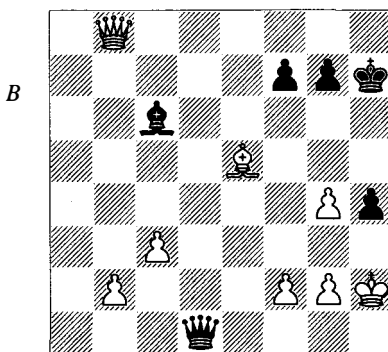
Or 54...♕g5 55 ♜g7+ ♕xf5 56 ♜f7+ ♕xe5 57 ♜xf1.

55 ♜f6+

This is the most straightforward, but White can also win by playing for mate: 55 ♜g7+ ♕h6 56 ♕f6 h4 57 ♙f4+ ♕h5 58 h3 d1 ♖ 59 ♜h7#.

55...♕g5 56 ♙d6 1-0

As already observed, the addition of queens to the opposite-coloured bishops dramatically increases the stronger side's chances of victory.



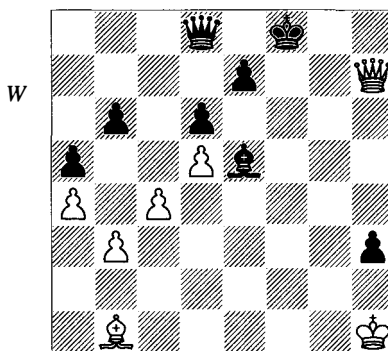
Ivanchuk – Blatny
World Junior Ch, Sharjah 1985

White is two pawns up, but his king lacks the support of his pieces.

32...♕f1! 33 f3 h3!! 34 ♕xh3 ♙xf3 35 ♕g3

35 ♕h4 is also inadequate to save White: 35...♖xg2 36 ♖c8 (threatening ♖f5+; if instead 36 ♙g3, Black also wins with 36...f6 37 g5 fxg5+ 38 ♕xg5 ♖h3) 36...f6! 37 ♖f5+ g6 38 ♖d7+ ♕h6 and White will soon be mated.

35...♖xg2+ 36 ♕f4 ♖xg4+ 37 ♕e3 ♖e4+ 38 ♕f2 ♖e2+ 39 ♕g3 f6!? 40 ♙d6 ♙e4 41 ♖c7 ♖f3+ 42 ♕h4 ♙f5 0-1



Sabinin – Tamarkin
Russian Correspondence Team Ch 1972-4

A familiar picture: the black king plays the role of an abandoned King Lear.

40 ♖h6+!

Not the hasty 40 ♖g6? ♖g7 41 ♜xh3 e5, which leads to an immediate draw after 42 ♜e6 ♜h4+ or gives Black counter-chances in the event of 42 dxe6 ♜f6.

40...♖g7

If 40...♖g8 then 41 ♖h7+, while 40...♗e8 is met by 41 ♜e6.

41 ♜e6 ♖f6

The only move.

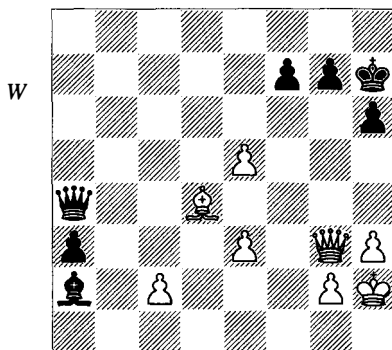
42 ♖g6 ♖g7 43 ♜f7+ ♖h6 44 ♖f5 ♖g5 45 ♜g6+ ♖f4 46 ♜g4+ ♖e3 47 ♜e4+ ♖f2

Or 47...♖d2 48 ♜d3+ ♖e1 49 ♜e3+ ♖d1 50 ♖d3.

48 ♖g4 ♖g3 49 ♜f3+ ♖h4 50 ♖e6!

After 50 ♜xh3+? ♖g5 51 ♜h5+ ♖f4 52 ♜f5+ ♖e3! Black's king sneaks out of the net via d4, and White has no more than a draw.

50...♖g5 51 ♜f5+ ♖h6 52 ♖f7 ♖g7 53 ♜g6+ ♖f8 54 ♜g8# (1-0)



de la Paz – Ro. Perez
Santa Clara 1996

Here again, the reason for Black's defeat is the same – his pieces are a long way from their king. True, if it were Black's move he would play 1...♖e6 (simplest), putting all the dangers behind him. But it is White to play. There followed:

1 e6! f6

Or 1...g5 2 ♜e5.

2 ♖xf6!

Not 2 e7? ♖f7.

2...gxf6

Alternatively, 2...♜a7 3 e7 or 2...g5 3 ♜c7+ ♖g6 4 ♜f7+ ♖f5 5 ♖d4+ ♖e4 6 ♜f3#.

3 ♜c7+ ♖g6

The only move.

4 ♜f7+ ♖f5

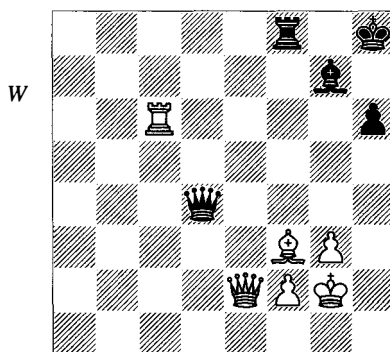
He can't save himself with 4...♖g5 either: 5 g4! ♜xc2+ 6 ♖g3 ♜g6 7 h4#.

5 ♜d7!! ♖b3

Other continuations also lose: 5...♜xc2 6 e7+ ♖e6 7 ♜b5+; 5...♜a5 6 e7+ ♖e6 7 ♜d3+; 5...♜a6 6 e7+ ♖e6 7 e4+! ♖g5 (7...♖xe4 8 e8♜) 8 ♜d2+ and 9 e8♜+; 5...♜e4 6 e7+ ♖e6 7 g4+!.

6 cxb3 ♜xd7 7 exd7 a2 8 d8♜ a1♜ 9 ♜d5+! ♖g6 10 ♜g8+ ♖f5 11 ♜g4+ ♖e5 12 ♜d4+ 1-0

The stronger side's chances increase still further if a pair of rooks are added to the queens and opposite bishops.



Gheorghiu – Grigorov
Zonal tournament, Prague 1985

In spite of the small number of pawns on the board, the situation must be recognized as exceedingly difficult for Black. And the chief reason for this is the exposed position of his king. The addition of rooks enhances White's attacking potential all the more.

63 ♖e4! ♖e8 64 ♖c4 ♜e5

Black still loses after 64...♜b2 65 ♜g4 ♖f8 66 ♖c2 ♜f6 67 ♖d3! ♖e8 68 ♖c7 ♜g5 (68...♖f8 69 ♜e4!) 69 ♜d7 ♖f8 (69...♖d8 70 ♖c8!; 69...♜e5 70 ♖c8! ♖g8 71 ♖xg8+! ♖xg8 72 ♖c4+ ♖h7 73 ♜d3+! ♖h8 74 ♜d8+ ♖h7 75 ♖d3+) 70 f4! ♜f6 71 ♜d5 ♖e8 72 ♖c6 ♜b2+ 73 ♖c2!.

65 ♜g4 ♜g5?

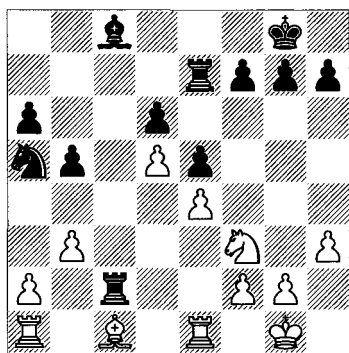
65...♖f8 is more resilient.

66 ♜d7 ♖f8 67 ♖c6 ♖g8 68 ♜e6+ ♖h8 69 ♖c8 h5?! 70 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 71 ♜f7 ♜h6 72 ♖d5! ♖g7 73 ♜xh5+ 1-0

Open File and Passed Pawn

We have repeatedly observed that for evaluating a middlegame position with opposite bishops, the key question is who possesses the initiative. Hence those elements of strategy which are relevant to this question will interest us first and foremost.

The initiative, however, is a temporary asset. It follows that in order to maintain it, you need to be constantly creating new threats. For this, it is imperative to be able to bring up fresh reserves to the strategically important sector of the board. In other words, the issue of communications comes to the fore. In chess this means the presence of open lines and control over them.



Aseev – Sturua

USSR Young Masters Ch, Lvov 1985

On the surface, the verdict on this situation is perfectly favourable to Black: in a closed position he controls the only open file. But let us try investigating this judgement a little more deeply. For this we shall apply our system of singling out the main strategic elements.

In the first place, this is a middlegame with opposite-coloured bishops. Here, as we know, the all-important factor is the activity of the bishops. But whereas 'job prospects' for the black bishop are not easy to fix up, the very next pair of moves will see the white one intervening forcefully in the struggle.

The second thing is the extremely awkward placing of the black knight on a5. (We recall what Tarrasch said: "For a chess-player, a knight on the edge of the board is a disgrace.")

Prospects for activating it are not to hand, since even the attempt to bring it to c5 (via b7) can be thwarted by playing b4.

Finally, there is the open c-file. Black's possession of it is his main trump. But Vladimir Vysotsky's song *The Professionals* comes to mind: "What was their chief trump a short while ago is no more a trump, but a trifle. And now their own weapon strikes them with rapid blows, just as hard as it hit others."

In the game, there followed:

23 ♖e3

Immediately stopping 23...♞ec7.

23...♜b7 24 ♖b6

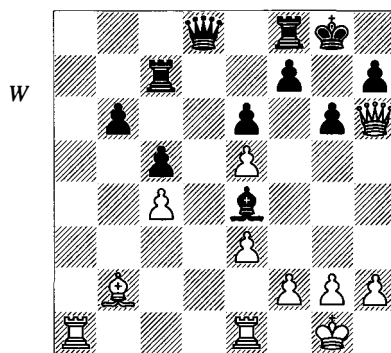
Depriving the knight of the d8-square as well.

24...♞e8 25 ♞ec1! ♞e2 26 ♞c7 ♞xe4 27 ♜g5 ♞f4 28 g3 ♞f6 29 b4! ♞g6 30 ♜f3 e4 31 ♜h4 ♞g5 32 ♜g2!

It would be bad technique to play 32 ♞ac1 ♜xh3 33 ♞xb7 ♞xd5, leaving Black with some shadowy hopes of salvation.

32...♞xd5 33 ♞ac1 ♖e6 34 ♜f4! ♞d2 35 ♜xe6 1-0

After 35...fxe6 36 ♞xb7, White doubles on the seventh rank for good measure.



Taimanov – Averbakh

Candidates tournament, Zurich 1953

23 ♞ed1 ♞d7 24 ♞d6!

It is White who has seized the d-file!

24...♜b7 25 ♞ad1?!

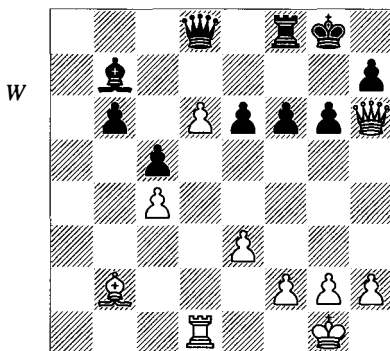
An unnecessary loss of time; better is 25 e4 or 25 h4.

25...♞xd6

If Black defends passively, then after e4 White can play ♞ld3-h3 or transfer his bishop

via c1 to g5 and f6. Another plan for White involves the pawn advance f4-f5.

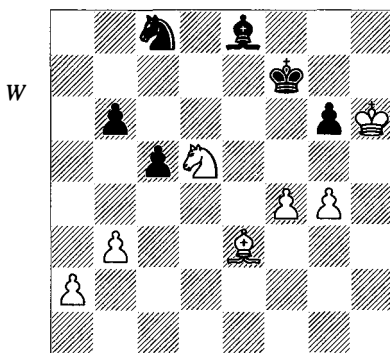
26 exd6 f6 (D)



Exercise 66: What would you play for White here?

(For the answer, see page 151.)

We have imperceptibly progressed from the theme of ‘the open file and the struggle for it’ to that of ‘the passed pawn’, which is also an important element of strategy.



R. Šveček – C. Hunter

Correspondence 1970-4

White is a pawn up, but without the knights the endgame would be dead drawn. How do things stand now? An important point of course is that the white pieces are much more active than the black ones. But the main, decisive factor contributing to White’s advantage is the possibility of creating a passed pawn.

40 f5! gxf5 41 g5!

The only way! Not, of course, 41 gxf5? ♖e7!? (41...♙c6!? is also adequate) 42 ♖xe7 ♙xe7 43 ♙g7 ♙f7!, with an obvious draw.

41...♙c6

If 41...♙g8 then 42 g6, with ♖f6+ to follow.

42 g6+ ♙e8 43 ♖f6+ ♙d8

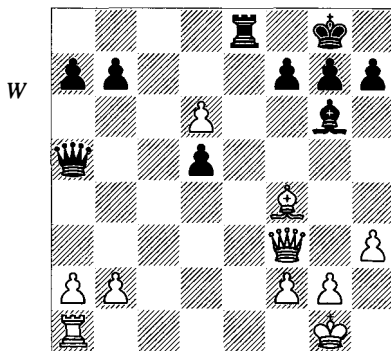
Or 43...♙e7 44 g7.

44 ♙g5 ♙c7 45 g7 ♖e7 46 ♙f4+!

Not 46 g8 ♙? ♖xg8+ 47 ♖xg8 ♙d6 48 ♖e7 ♙e4, with realistic drawing chances.

1-0

White answers 46...♙c8 with 47 ♙d6.



Karpov – Timman

Euwe Memorial, Amsterdam 1991

21 d7!

The white passed pawn sacrifices itself to disrupt the coordination of Black’s pieces.

21...♙e7

Or 21...♙d8 22 ♙e3 h6 (22...♙b5 23 ♙c7 ♙xd7 24 ♙xd8 ♙xd8 25 ♙d1 b6 26 ♙xd5) 23 ♙e8+ ♙h7 24 b4 ♙b6 25 ♙c1 ♙f5 26 ♙c7.

22 ♙c1 ♙xd7 23 ♙c8+ ♙d8

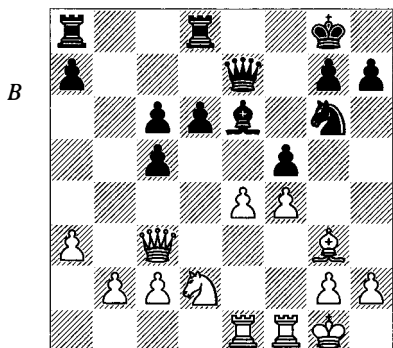
But now everything is decided by the weakness of Black’s back rank and the overloading of his queen.

24 b4!

Not, however, 24 ♙c3? ♙b6 25 ♙c5? ♙xc5 26 ♙xd8+ ♙f8.

24...♙b6 25 ♙c7 ♙xc8 26 ♙xb6 axb6 27 ♙xd5 h6 28 ♙xb7 ♙c1+ 29 ♙h2 ♙c2 30 ♙xb6 ♙xa2 31 ♙d4! 1-0

“With opposite bishops in the middlegame, a very important issue is who has the initiative, who is attacking. A blocked pawn on the same colour square as your bishop will drastically curtail your activity. That is a very serious positional failing in a middlegame of this type.” (Dvoretsky).



Glushkov – Zakharov
USSR 1961

White has the advantage due to his superior pawn-structure and more active pieces.

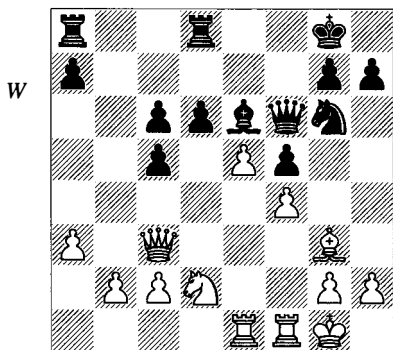
21...♟f6?!

An interesting practical decision. White is offered the choice between exchanging his active queen for Black's hitherto inactive one, or else allowing the black queen to generate some play on the kingside. Both courses should give White the advantage, as the damage to Black's pawn-structure outweighs his increased mobility. But psychologically, this must have been a difficult choice for White, in a position where he seemed completely in charge of events.

21...♟f7?! gives White a wider choice of plans, such as 22 ♞f3 h6 23 e5 or 22 b4!?, but the best defence is 21...♟d7, when continued careful play may well keep Black afloat.

22 e5! (D)

Black's pawns are now broken up, and the c5-pawn is doomed. After 22 ♟xf6!? gxf6 White retains his positional advantages, and can improve the position of his bishop by 23 ♞f2!, with g3 to follow, seeing that 23...♞xf4? allows 24 ♞h4! followed by exf5.



22...dxe5 23 fxe5 ♟g5

"The blockaded pawn (e5) on the same colour as the bishop promises nothing but trouble." (Simagin). However, Black has paid a high price for this, and in order to generate any threats, the bishop will need to leave its blockading post on e6, whereupon the white pawn may prove valuable indeed.

24 ♞f3 ♟g4 25 b3?

After 25 ♟xc5 f4 26 ♞f2 ♞d5 27 h3, Black's threats turn out to be hollow, and after 27...♟f5 28 ♟c3 ♞xf3 29 ♟xf3 ♟xc2 30 e6 or 27...♟h5 28 ♟c3 ♞xf3 29 ♟xf3 ♟xf3 30 gxf3 ♞d2 31 e6 White has a substantial advantage.

25...h5?

25...f4?! 26 ♞f2 ♞d5? is premature in view of 27 ♞xc5 with e6 possibly to follow. However, Black should have taken the opportunity to liquidate his main weakness by 25...c4!.

26 ♞h4?

White forces an exchange of knights, but allows Black to bring his rooks into the heart of White's position. 26 ♟xc5 is again strong.

26...♞xh4 27 ♞f4 ♟g5 28 ♞xh4 ♞d2!

Now 29...♞d5 is threatened.

29 ♞f4 ♞ad8 30 ♟xc5

30 h4 is also possible.

30...h4! 31 ♞xh4 ♞d1

Threatening 32...♞xe1+ 33 ♞xe1 ♞d1. After 31...♞d5 32 e6! ♞xg2+ 33 ♞f1 ♟d2 34 ♟xa7, White's counterplay is sufficient to draw.

32 ♟b4?

This loses drastically to a cunning piece of tactics. After 32 ♞f1! ♟d2 33 ♞xd1 ♟xd1+ 34 ♞e1 ♞d2 35 ♟e3 ♞xc2 36 ♞d4, White is OK.

32...♟e3+ 33 ♞f2 ♞8d2!! 0-1

Prophylaxis

The term *prophylaxis* was introduced into chess parlance by Aron Nimzowitsch.

"What we call *prophylaxis* is the taking of measures aimed at forestalling some events that are undesirable from the positional viewpoint."

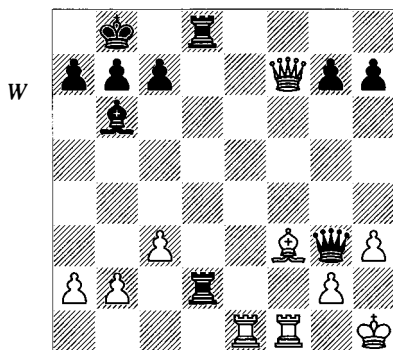
As the main tasks of prophylaxis, Nimzowitsch recognized in the first place the restriction of the opponent's possibilities, and secondly the over-protection of strategically important points. The modern conception of prophylaxis has been modified, deepened and broadened,

thanks in part to the theoretical contributions of Mark Dvoretsky, who added the term *prophylactic thinking* to the fundamentals of contemporary chess strategy.

“By this term I understand the habit of constantly asking yourself what your opponent wants to undertake, how he would proceed if it were his move. Your ability to find the answer to this question, and to allow for it in the process of decision-making, is what defines the level of your prophylactic thinking.” (Dvoretsky).

And again: “The principle of ‘prophylactic thinking’, which requires you to take your opponent’s intentions into account when coming to a decision, does not at all mean that you must always be making prophylactic moves.”

Thus, between Nimzowitsch’s term ‘prophylaxis’ and Dvoretsky’s principle of ‘prophylactic thinking’ there is much in common but also, of course, a substantial difference. To understand this better, let us examine some examples.



Falkbeer – Anderssen
Berlin 1851

Black is threatening to bring his bishop into the attack against the white king by means of ...c6 and ...♗c7. Another possibility is to utilize the active rook on White’s second rank.

In spite of the obviousness of Black’s intentions, the game went:

25 b4? c6 26 ♖e8 ♗c7 27 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 28 ♜g1 ♜h2+ 29 ♜f2 ♗b6+ 30 ♜e1 ♜g3+ 31 ♜e2 ♜e5+ 32 ♗e4 ♜xe4# (0-1)

In the game White didn’t apply even the most elementary prophylaxis. After the correct 25 ♖e7! (indicated by Yakov Neishtadt), Black can’t play 25...c6 and White is threatening 26

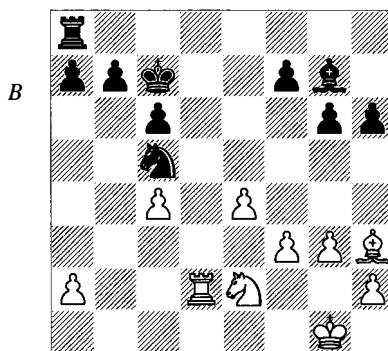
♜xg7. Now on 25...♜xb2? White wins with 26 ♜d5! c6 27 ♜xb7+! ♜xb7 28 ♜xc6+ ♜a6 29 ♜a4+ ♗a5 30 ♜c4+ ♜b5 (30...♜b6 31 ♜c6#) 31 a4 (not 31 ♜b1? ♜d1+ 32 ♜xd1 ♗c7!). Black’s strongest continuation is 25...♜f2, and then:

a) 26 ♜fe1?! (threatening 27 ♜d5) 26...a6! 27 b4 (27 ♜xg7 ♜xf3) 27...♜a7 28 ♜f5!? intending 29 ♜g4. If Black is to keep any advantage he must try 28...♜d3! 29 ♜xd3 (not 29 ♜g4?? ♜xf3) 29...♜xg2, when 30 ♜xa6+ bxa6 31 ♗xg2 leads to a ♜ vs 2♜ situation where the opposite bishops make White’s defence quite arduous.

b) 26 ♜xf2 ♜xf2 27 ♜h2 a6 and Black keeps a modest initiative as his king is more secure.

It must be observed that weak prophylaxis and inadequate prophylactic thinking both lead to the *impossibility of anticipating events*. As a result we lose control of the situation and feebly swim with the current without knowing where it will carry us.

Conversely, if we grasp our opponent’s intentions in time and find ways of forestalling them, this will enable us to divert the flow of the struggle in a direction that suits us.



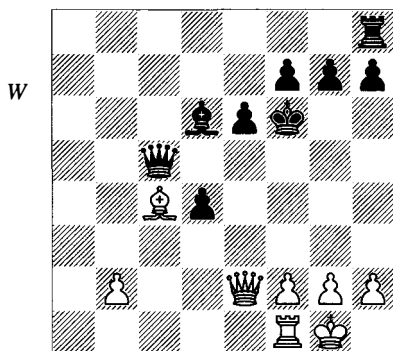
Koberl – Szabo
Hungarian Ch, Budapest 1951

Exercise 67: In Black’s place, what would you play?

(For the answer, see page 152.)

Let’s look at one more example of prophylactic thinking.

We shall quote from Botvinnik’s own commentary.

**Lilienthal – Botvinnik***USSR Absolute Ch, Leningrad/Moscow 1941***23 b3**

23 ♖f3+ is met by 23... ♗f5.

23...g6 24 ♖d1 ♖d8 25 g3 ♖g7 26 ♗f3

“The most natural plan for Black is the advance ...e5-e4. However, to carry this out he would need not only to defend the seventh rank but also to play ...f5, weakening his king position. Meanwhile, White would seize the a-file, invade the enemy camp with his rook and obtain counterplay. Black must therefore try to accumulate some more advantages, aiming in the first place to gain control of the open file. Incidentally on his last move White could have played 26 ♖a1. He will not be given another chance like that.”

26...♗e5 27 ♗b7 ♖b8 28 ♗e4 ♗f6 29 ♖g2 ♗a5

“So the a-file is in Black’s hands. As White is avoiding a queen exchange (for no good reason actually, since *with opposite bishops, as a rule, the winning chances are increased by additional pieces*), he removes his queen from the h1-a8 diagonal.”

30 ♗e2 ♖a8 31 ♖d3 ♗c5

“Black regroupes, since *the recommended formation is with the rook in front of the queen; as a rule the queen should only spearhead the attack when the moment comes for the decisive assault on the king’s fortress.*”

32 ♗e4 ♖a1 33 ♖d2 ♗a5 34 ♗e2 ♗a8+ 35 ♖h3

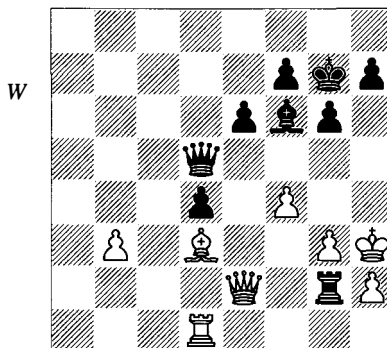
Not 35 ♗f3? ♖g1+, but 35 f3 is a playable alternative.

35...♖g1 36 f4 ♗c8

Threatening 37...e5+.

37 ♗a6 ♗c5 38 ♗d3 ♗d5 39 ♖d1?

Better is 39 ♗e4 or 39 b4.

39...♖g2! (D)**40 ♗e4**

If 40 ♗e1 then 40... ♖b2.

40...♖xh2+ 41 ♖xh2 ♗h5+ 42 ♖g2 ♗xd1 43 ♗c4 h5

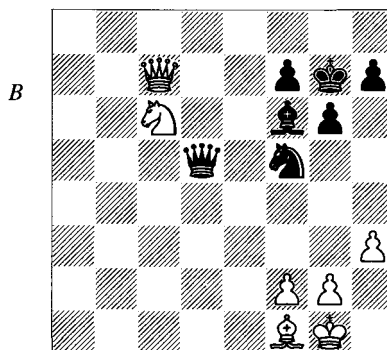
With a view to ...h4.

44 ♗f3 ♗xf3+ 45 ♖xf3 ♗e7 46 ♖e4 ♗c5 47 ♗b5 ♖f6 48 ♗e2 ♖e7 49 ♗b5 ♗b4 50 ♖xd4

Or 50 ♗c4 ♗e1 51 ♖f3 f5 52 ♗b5 h4 53 gxf4 ♗xh4.

50...♗e1 51 ♖e4 ♗xg3 52 ♖f3 ♗e1 53 ♗c6 ♗b4 54 ♗a4 ♗d6 55 ♗c6 f5 0-1**Piece Coordination**

As we know, in a middlegame with opposite-coloured bishops, the advantage belongs to the side with the initiative. But to possess the initiative, coordination between the pieces must be achieved.

**Tukmakov – Suba***Erevan 1980*

Evidently all the prerequisites for a drawn result are present – except for one thing: the actions of the white pieces are not coordinated, a circumstance that Black most skillfully exploits.

41...♖c5! 42 ♖b7

White's options are uniformly unpleasant: 42 ♖d7 ♗h4; 42 g3 ♗d4; 42 ♗e2 ♗d4; 42 g4 ♗d4 43 ♗g2 ♖c1+ 44 ♗h2 ♗e2 45 h4 ♖gl+ 46 ♗h3 ♖xf2; or 42 ♗d3 ♗d4 43 ♗e4 ♖c1+ 44 ♗h2 ♗e2.

42...♗d6

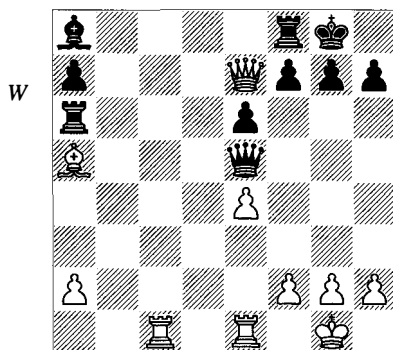
If 42...♗h4 then 43 ♖b2+.

43 ♖a6 ♗e4 44 ♗h2 ♖xf2 45 ♖d3 ♖f4+ 46 ♗g1

Or 46 g3 ♗xg3.

46...♗h4 47 ♖f3 ♗f2+ 0-1

The conclusion would be 48 ♗h1 ♗g3+ 49 ♗h2 ♗xf1+ 50 ♗h1 ♖h2#.



Yusupov – B. Kelly
Elista Olympiad 1998

Note the way all the black pieces are 'cooperating'. Then you will understand why White succeeded in finishing his opponent off in the space of four(!) moves.

28 ♗b4!

Technically the best continuation. After the tempting 28 ♗c3?! ♖b5! 29 ♗xg7 ♗e8!, the position is unclear.

28...♖b8 29 ♗c7!

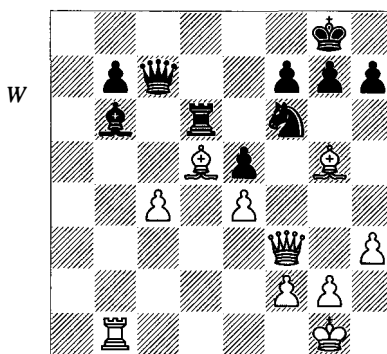
Again the strongest. After 29 ♖d7?! h6 30 ♗c8+?! ♗h7 31 ♗c3 ♖b1!! Black has adequate counterplay.

29...♖f4

Or 29...♖f6 30 ♖d7, with ♗c8+ to follow.

30 g3 ♖f6 31 ♖d7 1-0

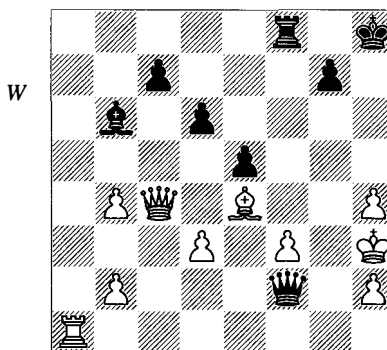
Most often, poor coordination of the pieces reveals itself with particular clarity in sharp tactical situations.



Lilienthal – Aronin
USSR Ch, Moscow 1948

Exercise 68: What would you play in White's place?

(For the answer, see page 152.)



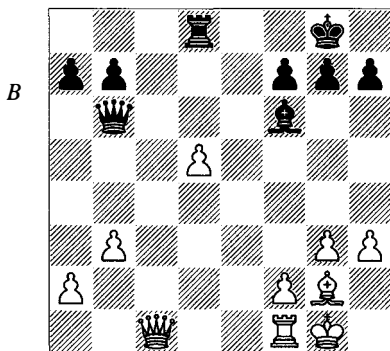
Smyslov – Addison
*Interzonal tournament,
Palma de Mallorca 1970*

Exercise 69: What would you play for White?
(For the answer, see page 153.)

Defence

In middlegames with opposite bishops, it is sometimes your misfortune to have to defend. You therefore need to know what you must aim for when your opponent has a material or positional advantage.

In such situations, the defending side should strive to reach a 'pure' opposite-bishop position, that is, to exchange pieces and reach an endgame.



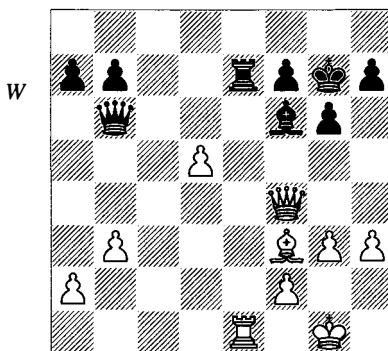
Korchnoi – Karpov

World Ch match (game 15), Merano 1981

“The extra pawn does not promise victory here. The position would be utterly drawn if Black could exchange the rooks or (a slightly worse case) the queens, and blockade the d5-pawn with his bishop. However, since the position has middlegame characteristics, the matter is not so simple. White retains the hope that he can create an attack on the b1-h7 diagonal against the king, meeting ...g6 by exchanging one pawn (h4-h5xg6), placing his own king on g2 and then combining threats on the h-file with an advance of the passed pawn – assuming that the blockade can be lifted, if only briefly. This plan looks somewhat abstract, but even a slight inaccuracy may leave Black in a dangerous situation. It is instructive to follow the masterly way in which the World Champion takes prophylactic measures against distant threats, achieving a rook exchange and an absolutely harmless position within a mere four moves.” (Makarychev).

25...g6 26 ♖f3 ♜g7 27 ♝e1 ♞d7 28 ♞f4 ♞e7! (D)

White has pointlessly delayed implementing the plan of ♜g2 and h4, which would have been quite good prophylaxis on his part. Instead, two useless moves (27 ♝e1 and 28 ♞f4) have given Karpov some excellent objects of attack: the rook on e1 (menaced with exchange!), the white queen (exposed to tempo-gaining threats), and, quite unexpectedly, the pawn on g3. Afraid that



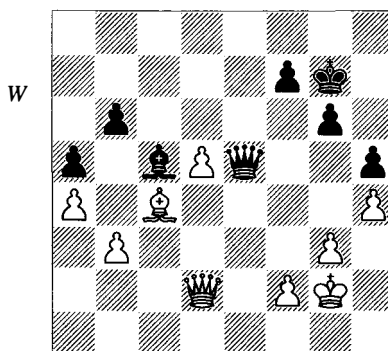
the position may become sharp, Korchnoi exchanges rooks, and thus forfeits any winning chances whatsoever.

29 ♞xe7

White gains nothing with 29 ♞f1 ♖e5 30 ♞g4 in view of 30...♞f6 or, even stronger, 30...♞c7! followed by 31...♞c2.

Yet if White does want to get somewhere (he is a pawn up after all), he should definitely play 29 ♞d1 ♖e5 30 ♞d2!, after which the capture on g3 is dangerous for Black: 30...♖xg3?! 31 d6 ♖e6 (31...♞d7 32 ♖g4 f5 33 ♞c3+ and 34 ♞xg3) 32 d7 ♖d6 33 ♞b2+ ♜g8 and now 34 ♞c1! leaves Black in serious trouble. Instead Black should probably choose the quiet 30...♞f6 (followed by ...♖d6), when his position is very hard to breach.

29...♖xe7 30 ♜g2 a5 31 h4 h5 32 ♖e2 ♖c5 33 ♖c4 ♞f6 34 ♞d2 b6 35 a4 ♞e5 (D)

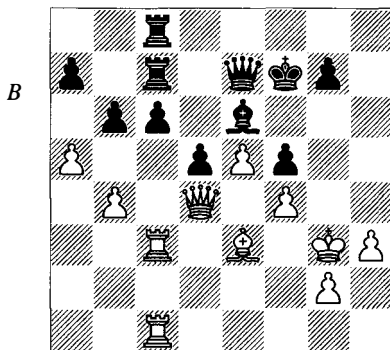


36 ♞d3 ♞f6 37 ♞d2 ♞e5 38 ♖e2 ♞e4+ 39 ♖f3 ♞e5 40 ♖d1 ♞e4+ 41 f3 1/2-1/2

White's last move was sealed, and a draw was agreed.

In an opposite-bishop middlegame, the defender is often prepared to pay the price of one

pawn or sometimes even two, in order to reach an endgame.

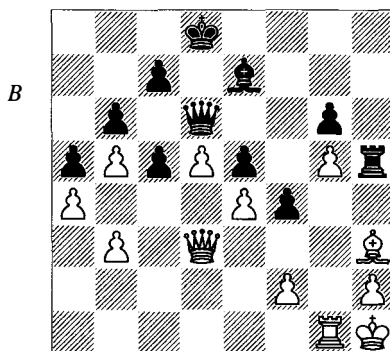


Timman – Salov

Candidates match (game 4), Saint John 1988

Exercise 70: In Black's place, what would you play?

(For the answer, see page 153.)



Botvinnik – Smyslov

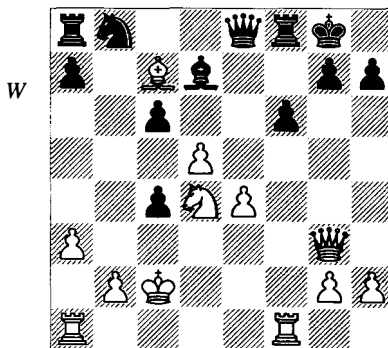
World Ch match (game 18), Moscow 1954

Exercise 71: What would you play for Black?
(For the answer, see page 153.)

Of course there are also some cases where exchanges favour the *stronger* side in an opposite-bishop middlegame.

In the following diagram, White's advantage in development is evident. But the position of his king is not entirely secure, and this may give his opponent counterplay. In this case, the best remedy is to head for the ending.

22 e5! cxd5 23 exf6 ♖g6+ 24 ♖xg6 hxc6 25 fxg7 ♕a4+



Shirov – Pira
Paris 1990

Or 25...♙xf1 26 ♙xf1 ♖c6 27 ♖xc6 ♕xc6 28 ♕e5.

26 ♖c3 ♕e8 27 ♙ae1 ♖a6 28 ♕d6 ♙xe1 29 ♙xe1 ♕e8 30 ♙xe8+ ♕xe8 31 ♖e6 ♕f7 32 ♖g5! ♖xg7 33 ♖d4 ♕g8 34 h4 ♖f6 35 g4! ♕e6 36 ♕e5+ ♖e7 37 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 38 h5 1-0

The Pawn-Structure

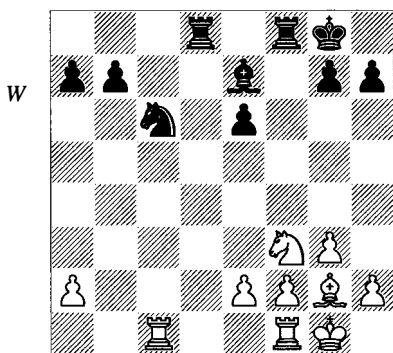
Since Philidor's time it has been established, and confirmed by practice, that the quality of the pawn-structure in most cases determines the evaluation of a position at the strategic level. The advantages and defects of the pawn-structure significantly affect the activity of the pieces. From this it clearly follows that in a middlegame with opposite bishops, where 'activity decides everything', the peculiarities of the pawn-position are of crucial importance. Any minor detail or 'trifle' may decisively affect the outcome of the game.

Yusupov – Spraggett

*Candidates match (game 3),
Quebec City 1989*

1 d4 d5 2 ♖f3 c5 3 c4 e6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♖c3 ♖c6 6 g3 ♖f6 7 ♕g2 ♕e7 8 0-0-0 ♕g5 ♕e6 10 dxc5 ♕xc5 11 ♕xf6 ♙xf6 12 ♖xd5 ♙xb2 13 ♖c7 ♙ad8 14 ♙c1 ♙xc1 15 ♙axc1 ♕e7 16 ♖xe6 fxe6 (D)

A position encountered hundreds of times in tournament practice. And even though the statistics clearly favour White, you will keep on meeting new optimists prepared to defend Black's



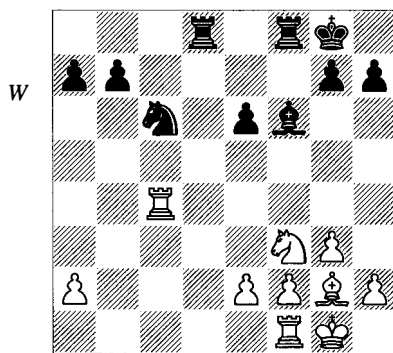
‘stronghold’. What positional grounds do they have for this?

Black, to be sure, has an extra ‘pawn-island’. But there are no queens on the board, so the endgame is not remote, and if it is reached, the opposite bishops virtually guarantee Black’s safety. In addition, the possibility of creating an outside passed pawn on the queenside at some future time is an attraction.

Yet if we delve into the situation further, it becomes clear that, in the first place, an ending with only pawns and opposite bishops is still some way off; secondly, Black’s pawn-weakness is going to reduce his pieces to passivity; and thirdly, since the initiative will be in White’s hands, the opposite bishops will be a scourge for his opponent.

Let us see how the game went.

17 ♖c4 ♗f6 (D)



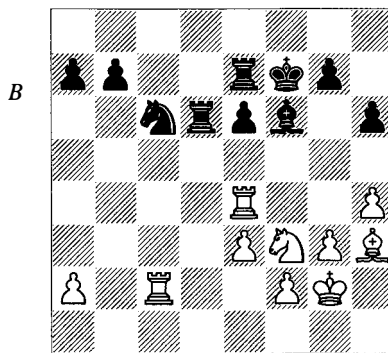
Before this game, the main line for White was now considered to be 18 ♖b1, whereupon Black solved his opening problems with comparative ease by playing either 18...♗d6 or 18...♗d7. The point of Black’s last move comes across especially clearly in the variation 18 ♖b1 ♗d7 19 h4 ♗d4!?. The conclusion

is not difficult: White needs to control the d4-square!

18 e3! ♗d6 19 h4 h6 20 ♖e4 ♗fd8 21 ♗h3

Stepping up the pressure on e6.

21...♗f7 22 ♗g2 ♖e8 23 ♗c1 ♖e7 24 ♖c2 (D)



In this position Spraggett played:

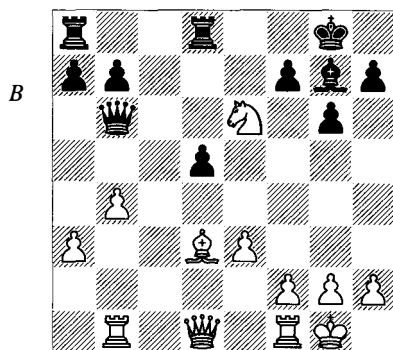
24...b6

Exercise 72: Give a positional evaluation of this move.

(For the answer, see page 154.)

In a 40-move game (which statistically is the average length), how many moves are particularly important, decisive, critical? Just 5 as a rule – 8 at most. True, the other 32-35 moves have significance and influence. But they are not *so* significant. Let us consider. The opening moves proceed on ‘auto-pilot’. Open files have to be occupied, weaknesses have to be attacked, and so forth – and we do this automatically. In a position with an isolated pawn, where should we place the rooks (c1 and d1, d1 and e1, or some other arrangement)? Of course this matters, but in most cases it cannot radically alter the evaluation of the position. On the other hand, the correctness of our response to the major strategic issues (tactics, the calculation of variations, is a separate matter) determines not only the verdict on the position but the course of the ensuing struggle and often the result of the game.

These important, decisive strategic issues include the problem of the pawn-structure and its transformation. In cases where the pawns are being fixed in a particular configuration for the long term, our decision needs to be weighed and thought out with exceptional care.



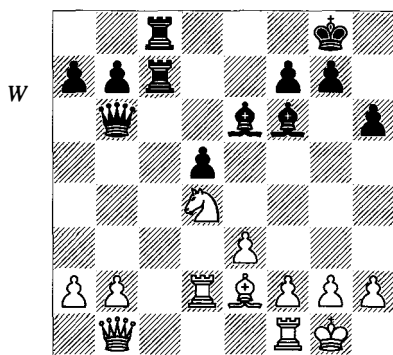
Dorfman – Cifuentes
West Berlin 1989

With his last move White captured the black bishop on e6.

Exercise 73: What would you recapture with – queen or pawn?

(For the answer, see page 155.)

It's interesting to observe that an analogous strategic error had been committed in the World Championship match four years earlier.



Karpov – Kasparov

World Ch match (game 4), Moscow 1985

21 ♖xe6!

An exchange we already understand.

21...fxe6?

And the strategic error that we understand too.

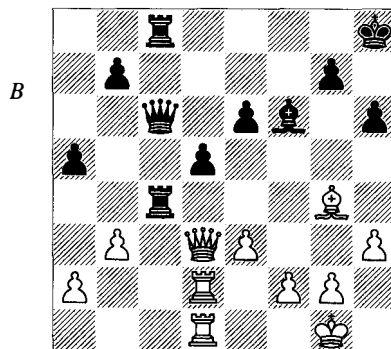
Kasparov was evidently reckoning on some straightforward reaction from his opponent, such as 22 ♖g6? ♖a5 or 22 ♖fd1? ♖b4 23 a3 ♖xd2. But the trouble is that White's advantage (the weakness of Black's king position) is of a static, long-term character. Naturally, therefore,

White is in no hurry to initiate tactical complexities.

22 ♖g4! ♖c4 23 h3 ♖c6 24 ♖d3 ♖h8?!

This in addition shows poor anticipation of events, as we shall see from the further course of the struggle.

25 ♖fd1 a5 26 b3! (D)



Denying Black the chance to develop his queenside initiative further.

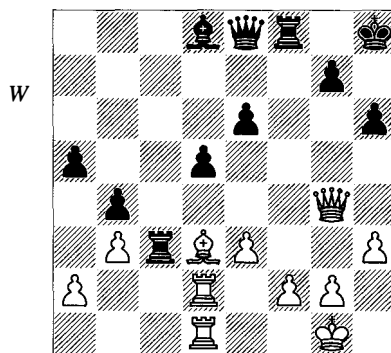
26...♖c3 27 ♖e2 ♖f8 28 ♖h5! b5 29 ♖g6!

Clearly illustrating the idea that *with opposite bishops in the middlegame, an attack against the king is more important than the opponent's initiative on the other flank.*

29...♖d8 30 ♖d3 b4 31 ♖g4

Threatening 32 ♖g6.

31...♖e8 (D)



32 e4!

It is only now, when the difference in activity between the two sides has become overwhelming, that White starts a tactical clash.

32...♖g5?!

Losing the strategic battle, Black tries to extricate himself from trouble by means of traps. Now 33 ♖e2?? will be met by 33...♖f4. But

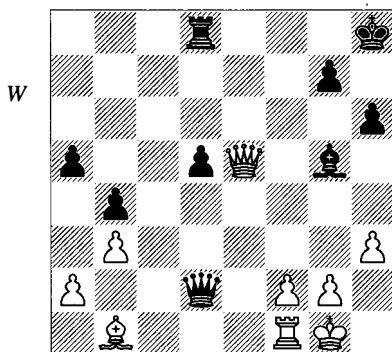
placing the bishop on the a7-g1 diagonal would have been more useful.

33 ♖c2 ♜xc2?

A major error. Exchanging queens rather than rooks would have been better. True, the simple 33...♙f7?! leads nowhere in view of 34 ♜e2!, but the least of the evils was 33...♙c8 34 exd5! exd5 (34...♜xc2? 35 ♙e4) 35 ♙xc8! ♜fxc8 36 ♜e2 ♜c1 37 ♜xc1 ♜xc1+ 38 ♙h2 ♜c8 39 ♙g6 ♙f6, with advantage to White.

34 ♙xc2 ♙c6 35 ♙e2 ♙c5 36 ♜f1 ♙c3 37 exd5 exd5 38 ♙b1 ♙d2 39 ♙e5 ♜d8?! (D)

A more stubborn defence was 39...♙f6 40 ♙f5 ♙g8.



40 ♙f5 ♙g8 41 ♙e6+ ♙h8

Or 41...♙f8 42 ♙g6 ♙f4 43 ♜e1.

42 ♙g6 ♙g8 43 ♙e6+ ♙h8 44 ♙f5!

This is stronger than 44 ♜e1 ♜f8.

44...♙c3 45 ♙g6 ♙g8 46 ♙e6+ ♙h8 47 ♙f5 ♙g8 48 g3! ♙f8 49 ♙g2 ♙f6 50 ♙h7 ♙f7 51 h4 ♙d2

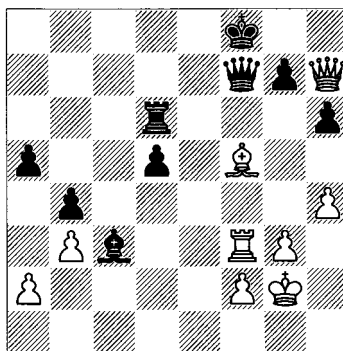
Otherwise 52 ♜e1.

52 ♜d1 ♙c3 53 ♜d3 ♜d6 54 ♜f3! (D)

Even the most clearly won positions demand accuracy: 54 ♜e3? g5! draws.

54...♙e7

B

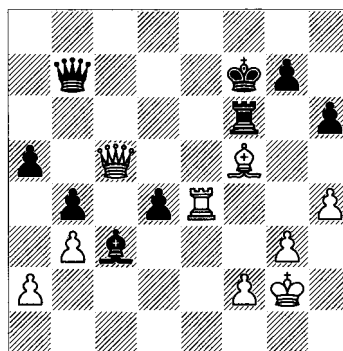


Or 54...♙f6 55 ♜e3 ♜xf5 56 ♙h8+ ♙g8 57 ♜e8+.

55 ♙h8 d4 56 ♙c8 ♜f6 57 ♙c5+ ♙e8 58 ♜f4 ♙b7+ 59 ♜e4+ ♙f7 (D)

Or 59...♜e6 60 ♙c4! ♜xe4 61 ♙g8+ ♙e7 62 ♙xg7+.

W

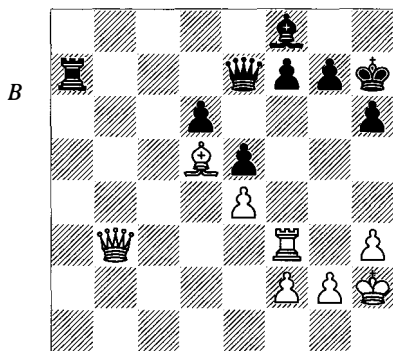


60 ♙c4+ ♙f8 61 ♙h7! ♜f7 62 ♙e6 ♙d7 63 ♙e5 1-0

We have been examining middlegame positions with opposite bishops. And the conclusion is indisputable. *In the middlegame, opposite-coloured bishops are harbingers of war, not peace.*

Answers to Exercises for Chapter 5

Exercise 60



Although White is a pawn down, there is no doubting his superiority, which rests, in the first place, on the appreciable difference in activity between the opposite-coloured bishops.

In middlegame positions with opposite bishops, defending is a good deal more complicated than attacking.

It is essential for Black to try to construct a fortress, and this can be accomplished by playing 36...♖g8!. Then after 37 ♖c3, the simplest way of parrying White's threat to invade the eighth rank is 37...♗d8!. Also, in the line to be expected – 37 ♖xf7 ♗xf7 38 ♕xf7+ ♖xf7 (intending 39...g6 and 40...♖g7) 39 ♗e6 g5! 40 ♗g6+ ♕g7 41 ♗xd6 ♖xf2 – Black achieves his aim.

Probably 37 ♗b8!? sets the most problems, but even so, after 37...♗c7 (not 37...g6?? 38 ♖xf7 ♗xf7 39 ♗xa7) 38 ♖xf7 (38 ♕xf7+ ♗xf7 39 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 is similar to the previous line) 38...♗xb8 39 ♖b7+ ♖h7 40 ♖xb8 ♕e7, followed by 41...h5 and 42...g6, a draw would be the most likely result.

In the game, however, there followed:

36...f6? 37 ♗b8 g6 38 ♖c3?!

An inaccuracy in mutual time-trouble; 38 g4! is technically more correct.

38...h5 39 g4 ♖h6!

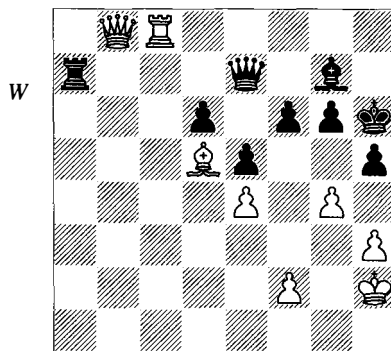
The only move.

40 ♖c8?

With his last move before the time-control, White lets the win slip for good. By playing 40

♗c8!! (with the threat of 41 gxf5 ♖xh5 42 ♗g4+ ♖h6 43 ♖g3 ♗h7 44 ♕e6 and 45 ♕f5) 40...h4 41 ♗b8 f5?! 42 exf5 gxf5 43 ♖c8 (with a view to 44 ♖e8 and 45 ♖e6+), he could have retained good chances of victory.

40...♕g7 (D)



41 gxf5 ♖xh5

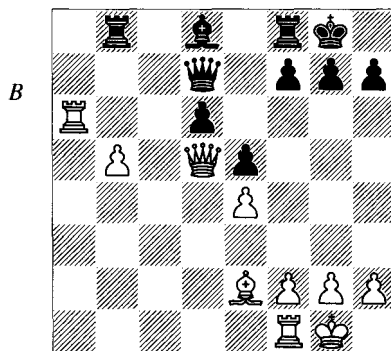
Aiming for ...f5 and ...♗g5-f4+.

42 ♖e8 ½-½

The players agreed a draw without resuming the adjourned game. A possible variation is 42...♗d7! 43 ♖d8 ♗c7. (Annotations based on those by Sergei Makarychev.)

(Now return to page 126.)

Exercise 61



Timoshchenko was rescued by the fact that he could quickly solve the problem of activating his bishop.

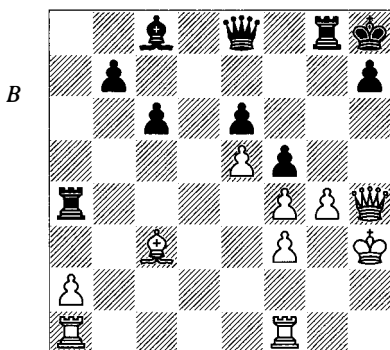
27...♕b6 28 ♖d1 ♖fd8

Not, of course, 28...♕c5?? losing a piece to 29 ♗xc5.

29 ♕c4 ♕c5 30 g3 g6! 31 ♖d3 ♖g7 32 ♖c6 ♗e7 33 ♖f3 ♖f8 ½-½

(Now return to page 127.)

Exercise 62



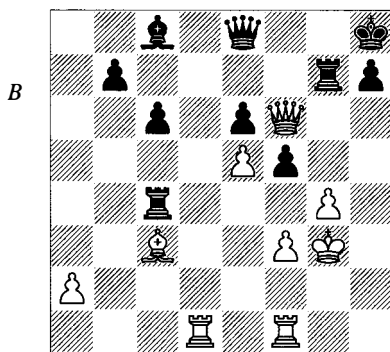
Black has several possibilities (candidate moves) – and one of them is 28...♖a3?. This looks tempting, since if the white bishop moves, Black replies 29...fxg4+. On 29 ♖a1?, Black has the pleasant choice between 29...b5 (threatening ...b4), the simple 29...♗g6, and the aggressive 29...fxg4+ 30 fxg4 h5!?. However, White has a clear refutation: 29 ♗f6+! ♗g7, and instead of the unclear 30 ♖a1? fxg4+ 31 ♖h4 ♖d7!, he can play 30 ♖b4! fxg4+ 31 ♖h4, when Black has no time to find an adequate reply to the threat of ♖f8.

Therefore we can conclude that Black's choice in the game was relatively best:

28...♖xf4 29 ♗f6+ ♗g7 30 ♖g3 ♖c4

30...♖a4 is also possible.

31 ♖a1!? (D)



31...♖d7?!

Now Black's difficulties start to increase. Inserting 31...f4+ renders it harder for White to make inroads.

32 ♖d2!

Here is the possibility for White that his opponent failed to allow for. Black loses practically

all control over the course of the fight; his game tumbles downhill.

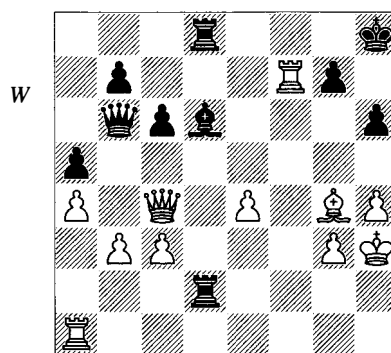
32...♖g8 33 ♖h6 ♗g6?! 34 ♖xd7! ♖xf6 35 ♗g7+ ♖h8 36 exf6 ♗b8+ 37 f4 ♖c3+ 38 ♖h4

Threatening 39 f7.

38...♗f8 39 ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 40 ♖xf8 ♖g8 41 ♖e7 fxg4 42 ♖g1 ♖h3+ 43 ♖xg4 1-0

(Now return to page 133.)

Exercise 63



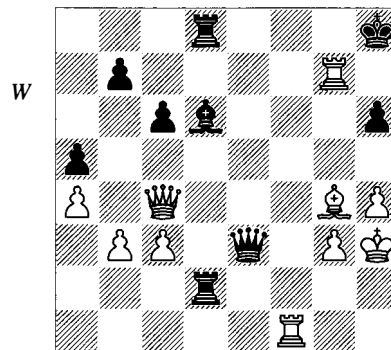
Removed to the queenside, the black pieces have deserted their own king. This, plus the presence of opposite bishops, allows White to carry out the concluding attack.

29 e5! ♖xe5 30 ♖af1 ♖d6

Black also loses with either 30...♖d5 31 ♖f8+ ♖xf8 32 ♖xf8+ ♖h7 33 ♗e4+ g6 34 ♖h5! ♖g7 35 ♗xg6+ ♖xf8 36 ♗f7# or 30...♖f6 31 ♖1xf6 gx6 32 ♗f4.

31 ♖xg7!? ♗e3 (D)

Or 31...♖xg7 32 ♖f7+.



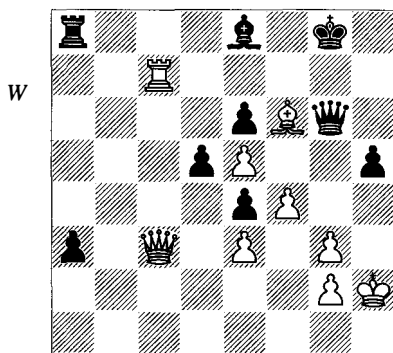
32 ♖h5

Good enough, but 32 ♖h7+! ♖xh7 33 ♗f7+ ♖h8 34 ♗f6+ ♖h7 35 ♖f5+ ♖g8 36 ♖e6+ ♖h7 37 ♖f3 wins more or less by force.

32...♖f2 33 ♜xf2 ♜xf2 34 ♜g6 ♜f5+ 35
♔g2! ♜xh5? 36 ♜d4+ ♜e5 37 ♜xd6 ♜xd4 38
♜xd4 ♜e8 39 ♜d6! 1-0

(Now return to page 134.)

Exercise 64



The presence of opposite bishops on the board has enabled White to accumulate sufficient aggressive potential to conduct the final attack with success.

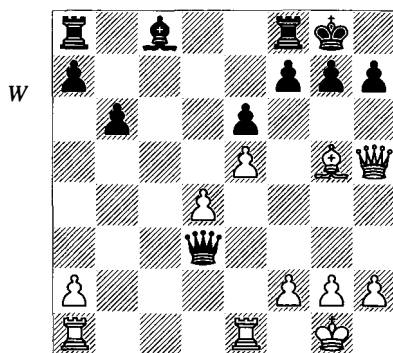
56 f5!! ♜g4

Or 56...exf5 57 e6 a2 58 ♜a1! (threatening ♜g7+) 58...♜xf6 59 ♜xf6 a1 ♜ 60 ♜g7+.

57 ♜b4 ♔f7 58 ♜xf7! 1-0

(Now return to page 134.)

Exercise 65



White's attack, reinforced by the presence of opposite bishops, could become extremely dangerous. Black's main counterplay stems from White's difficulty in bringing his rooks into his attack without leaving his back rank exposed.

18 ♜h4?!

After this slow move, Black can mobilize his rooks quickly enough to keep the game in the

balance. 18 ♜e3! saves time, as 18...♜xd4? loses to 19 ♜d1 followed by ♔f6. Then Black faces a more difficult defence.

18...♔b7 19 ♜e3 ♜f5 20 ♜g3 ♔h8 21 ♜e1 ♜ac8 22 h3 ♔d5 23 ♜g4 ♜c2

Black's queenside play gradually makes progress, while White is regrouping his pieces to strike the decisive blow. Black must remain focused on his counterplay against White's back rank.

24 ♜e3

24 ♜f4 ♜g6 25 ♜g4 ♜f5 26 ♜f4 is a draw by repetition.

24...♜g8 25 ♜f4?

25 ♜g3 ♜xf2+ 26 ♔h2 ♔f3! 27 ♔e3! ♜e2! 28 ♔h6! ♔xg4 29 ♔xg7+ leads to perpetual check.

25...♜g6?

Black squanders a tempo with fatal consequences. 25...♜c1+ 26 ♔h2 ♜b1 gives Black very serious play against White's king.

26 ♔h2 ♜c1 27 ♜g4 ♜f5

27...♜b1 loses to 28 ♔f6.

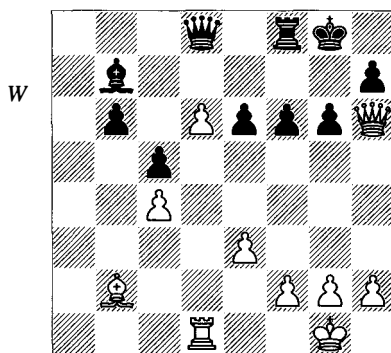
28 ♜g3 ♜b1

Or 28...♜cc8 29 ♜f4.

29 ♔xc1 1-0

(Now return to page 135.)

Exercise 66



27 d7

"A powerful move! The pawn advances to its own certain doom, but wrecks the coordination of the black pieces. While Black is looking for ways to combat the fearsome pawn, the white pieces will endeavour to occupy even more active positions." (Bronstein).

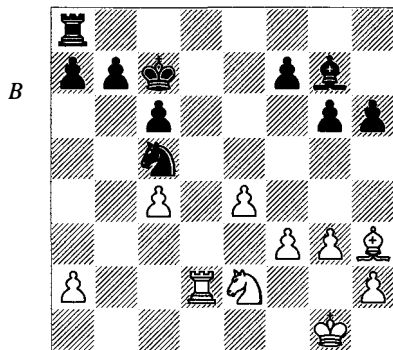
White now threatens 28 ♜xf8+ ♔xf8 29 ♔xf6. If Black counters this with 27...♜f7 28

♖h3! f5, there follows 29 ♖h6! ♜xd7 30 ♖g7+! ♜xg7 31 ♜xd8+, winning.

Additional Exercise 66A: Faced with this threat, what would you play for Black?

(For the answer, see page 155.)

Exercise 67



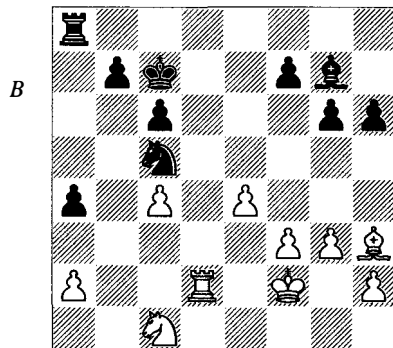
To answer this question correctly, it is essential to apply some prophylactic thinking. Let us mentally rotate the board by 180 degrees and decide what we would want to play in *White's* place. 'Enemy number one' is the black knight on c5, so White will of course be dreaming of exchanging it, or, failing that, expelling it from its active post. Hence it becomes clear that the threat is ♖c1-b3, completely levelling the game. Black must prevent this turn of events. So the necessary solution is found!

23...a5! 24 ♖c1 a4!

Good moves fit multiple strategic plans. New ideas crop up along the way – for instance the manoeuvre ...♜a6-b6, or ...a3 and ...♜a4.

25 ♜f2 (D)

Or 25 ♖d3 ♜d8 26 ♜f1 ♜d4.



25...a3 26 ♜e2 ♜b2 27 ♜c2

If 27 ♖d3 then 27...♖a4.

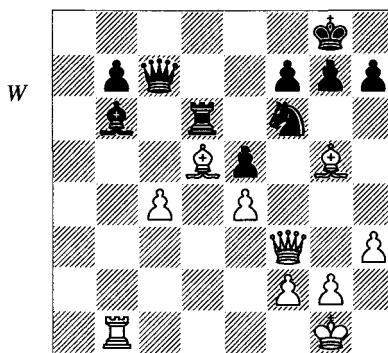
27...♜d8 28 ♜f1 ♖a4 29 ♖d3 ♖c3+ 30 ♜e3 ♖xa2! 31 ♖xb2 ♖b4 32 ♜c1 axb2 33 ♜b1 ♖c2+ 34 ♜f4

Or 34 ♜e2 ♖a3 35 ♜xb2 ♖xc4.

34...g5+ 35 ♜e5 ♜d6! 36 c5 ♜e6+ 37 ♜f5 ♖e3# (0-1)

(Now return to page 141.)

Exercise 68



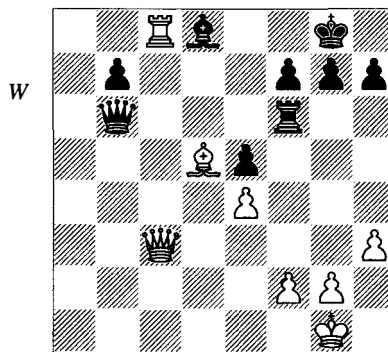
25 c5! ♜xc5 26 ♜c1 ♖a5 27 ♜xf6 ♜xf6

He couldn't save himself with 27...gxf6 either: 28 ♜c8+ ♜d8 (or 28...♜d8 29 ♖h5, and f7 cannot be defended, since 29...♜d7 is met by 30 ♖g4+) 29 ♖h5! ♖xd5 30 exd5 ♜xc8 31 ♖g4+.

28 ♜c8+ ♜d8 29 ♖c3

An even stronger line is 29 ♖d1! ♜f8 30 ♜c6!.

29...♖b6 (D)



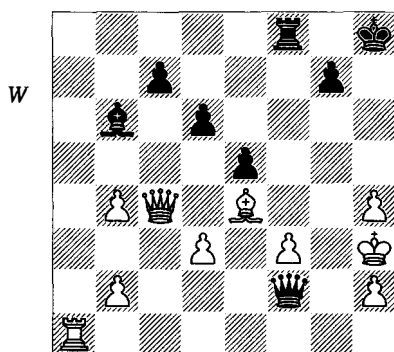
30 ♖b2! ♖d6 31 f4! exf4

Or 31...♜xf4 32 ♖xe5.

32 e5 ♖d7 33 ♖xb7! ♖e8 34 ♖b8 ♜d6 35 ♖xd6 ♜b6+ 36 ♖xb6 ♖xc8 37 e6 g5 38 e7 ♜g7 39 ♜c6 1-0

(Now return to page 143.)

Exercise 69



In this position, which on the face of it looks double-edged, the result is decided by Black's vulnerability on his back rank.

35 ♖f7! ♖f1+ 36 ♜g4! ♜g2+ 37 ♜h5

An astonishing example of 'total war' in chess, where even the white king joins in the attack against the black one.

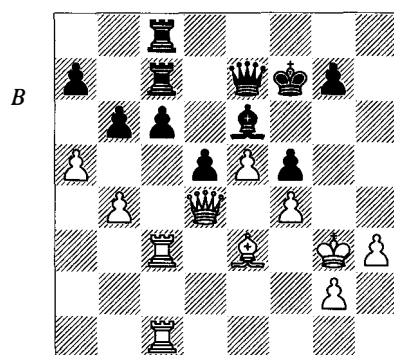
37...♜g8 38 ♜a8 g6+

There was no salvation in the endgame either: 38...♜a8 39 ♜xa8 g6+ 40 ♜xg6 ♜xg6+ 41 ♜xg6, and White wins by bringing his h-pawns to h7 and h6, his bishop to e4, and his king to c6 – placing Black in zugzwang.

39 ♜xg6 1-0

(Now return to page 143.)

Exercise 70



Black has the worse position. He therefore steers the game into a drawn ending by means of a pawn sacrifice.

31...bxa5 32 bxa5 c5! 33 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 34 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 35 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 36 ♜xc5 a6 37 ♜b6 ♜d7 38 ♜d4 g6 39 ♜h4 ♜e6 40 ♜g5 ♜d7 41 ♜h6

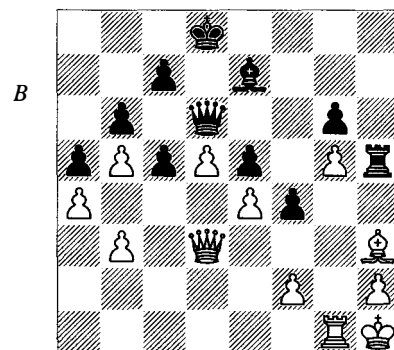
In the event of 41 g4 fxg4 42 hxg4 ♜c8 43 f5 gxf5 44 gxf5 ♜d7, the black bishop can play waiting moves on the squares c8 and d7. White therefore has no possibility to exploit a zugzwang situation and will have nothing better than to play e6 at some point. After 45 e6+ ♜xe6 46 fxex6+ ♜xe6, the queening square of White's sole surviving pawn is in the corner not covered by his bishop, guaranteeing Black an easy draw.

41...♜e6 42 ♜c5

And a draw was soon agreed.

(Now return to page 145.)

Exercise 71



Black's position looks critical. The point is not that he is a pawn down and unable to regain it (39...♜xg5? 40 ♜g4, with h4 to follow). The main thing, and a recurring feature of middle-games with opposite bishops, is that his king feels most insecure (this comes out in the variation 39...♜xg5? 40 ♜f3!, when there is no satisfactory defence to the threat of ♜g4). Add to this the fact that Black was playing with his flag dangling, and we can only say 'hats off' to the decision Smyslov took:

39...c4!!

Instead of playing to recover his pawn, Smyslov sacrifices another one. It must be stated that this is the only way to save the game!

40 bxc4 ♜a3

Forcing a queen exchange, as Black does not risk losing the endgame even with two pawns less! This is guaranteed by his active rook and, crucially, by the opposite bishops.

41 ♜xa3 ♜xa3

The sealed move.

42 ♜f5!?

Analysis has convinced Botvinnik that 'peaceful' methods promise White no chance of victory.

42...gxf5 43 g6 ♖f8

The only move. Black loses with 43...♗h8? 44 g7 ♗g8 45 h4 ♖e7 (45...♖e7 46 h5 ♖f7 47 h6) 46 h5 ♖f6 47 h6 ♖e7 48 ♗g6.

44 exf5 ♖g7 45 f6 ♖xf6 46 g7 ♖xg7 47 ♗xg7 f3!?

Another move adequate to draw is 47...e4.

48 ♖g4 ♗h3!! 49 ♗g3

Equality similarly results from 49 ♗e4 ♖d7 (when White should avoid 50 ♗xe5? ♗h4), or 49 ♖gl ♖d7 50 ♗g7+ ♖d6 51 ♗g6+.

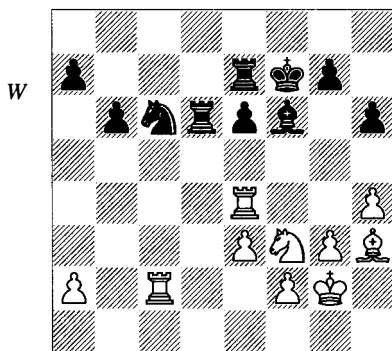
49...♗h4 50 ♗xf3 ♗xc4 51 ♖a3 ♖d7 52 ♖g2 ♖d6 53 ♖g3 ♖xd5 54 h3!

The straightforward 54 h4?! would give Black some chances (albeit slim ones) of winning by bringing his king to h5.

54...♖e6 55 ♖f3 ♖f5 56 ♖g3 ♖g5 57 ♖f3 ♗f4+ 58 ♖g3 ½-½

(Now return to page 145.)

Exercise 72



Every move with a pawn must be extremely well thought out!

'Measure seven times, cut once!' is a popular Russian proverb. In support of this absolutely correct principle, I have an adage of my own, facetious though it may sound: *every faulty pawn move in a game of chess is worse than an unhappy marriage.*

Just consider. A girl has chosen a partner for herself, hurriedly and – as it later turns out – unwisely. Oh, what a calamity! She 'only' needs to get a divorce and choose a more suitable spouse. In chess, on the other hand – make a weak move with a pawn (which as we know doesn't go

backwards), and you must suffer for the rest of your life, that is, to the end of the game.

Of course this is a joke, but you can draw the conclusions yourself.

Black's mistaken pawn move 24...b6? is based on weak prophylactic thinking and a failure to envisage the coming events. In consequence he completely loses control of the situation on the board. He had to keep the c-file sealed and his knight supported.

25 ♗f4!

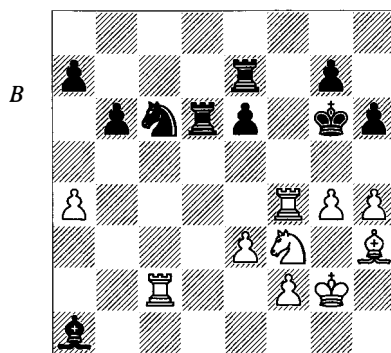
The result is that White already threatens 26 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 27 ♖e5+. On 25...♖g8 he has the unpleasant 26 ♖d2!, threatening ♖e4. His initiative begins to snowball.

25...♖g6 26 g4!? ♖a1

Black could try 26...♖e5, though after 27 g5 he should avoid the obvious 27...hxg5? 28 hxg5 ♖d3 29 gxf6 ♖xf4+ 30 exf4 gxf6 31 f5+, when White's advantage is close to decisive, and instead play 27...♖d3, the point being that at the end of the analogous line, White will not have ♖h4+ because his pawn is still on that square. White may do better with 27 ♗e4.

27 ♗c1 ♖b2 28 ♗c2 ♖a1 29 a4! (D)

The continuation 29 h5+?! ♖h7 30 g5 g6 leads only to a reduction of the pawns, which definitely favours the defending side. After 29 ♗fc4?! ♖e5, the exchange of knights brings the 'pure' opposite-bishop position closer, so of course this too would suit Black.



29...♖e5?!

Here, however, the knight exchange allows both white rooks to attain maximum activity. If you add to this that we are still clearly in a middlegame position and that the black king is in danger, it is easy to assume that White's initiative will soon grow into an attack.

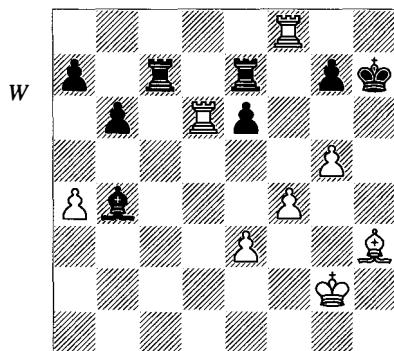
30 ♖xe5+ ♗xe5 31 ♜f8! ♜dd7

31...♗h7 is better, though it is likely that the result of the game would no longer have been affected.

32 f4 ♜c7

Black loses at once with 32...♗c7? 33 f5+ exf5 34 gxf5+ ♗h7 35 f6!.

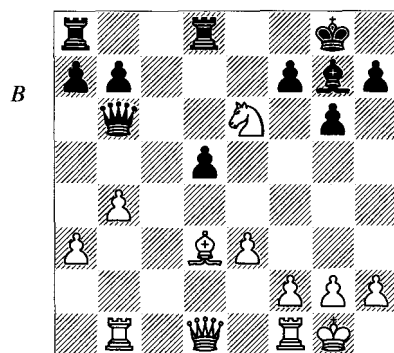
33 ♜d2 ♗c3 34 ♜d6 ♗h7 35 g5 hgx5 36 hgx5 ♗b4 (D)



Additional Exercise 72A: What is White's best continuation?

(For the answer, see page 156.)

Exercise 73



In the game, Black missed the point. Concerned to fortify his weak pawn on d5, he played:

20...fxe6?

But in chess as in life, everything tends to be ambivalent, and the advantages of a particular decision are accompanied by its shortcomings. Indeed, *chess understanding is defined by the need to weigh all the pros and cons – as if on a beam balance – in the process of selecting the most acceptable decision.*

In the present situation a more critical factor is Black's weakened king position. The isolation of his d-pawn was counterbalanced by the threat to advance it with ...d4 and by the wealth of piece-play on the open c-file involving ...♜ac8-c3. Therefore the position after 20...♜xe6 could rightly be acknowledged as approximately equal.

In the game, after 20...fxe6?, there followed:

21 ♜e2 ♜ac8 22 ♜fc1 ♜c6 23 g3 ♜dc8 24 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 25 h4!

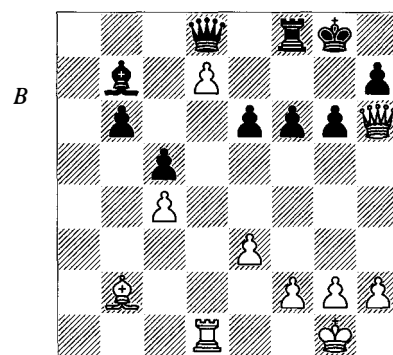
The black king has started to feel uncomfortable. Now in the event of 25...e5 26 e4 d4 27 h5 White would retain the initiative after either 27...gxh5 28 ♜xh5 ♜h6 29 ♜g4 or 27...g5 28 ♜g4.

White went on to win the game.

(Now return to page 147.)

Solutions to Additional Exercises

Additional Exercise 66A



In the game, Black resolved on:

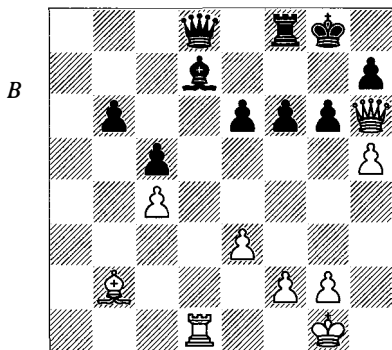
27...♗c6

Parrying the threat of 28 ♜xf8+ in view of 28...♗xf8 29 ♗xf6 ♜xd7. However, White has other approaches, and as the game went, the struggle flared up with new vehemence.

Bronstein proposed 27...e5! as "a more radical solution to the problem of defending the whole diagonal". After 28 ♜h3 ♜e7 (intending ...♜d8, ...♗c6 and ...♜xd7), 29 f4 looks necessary but it does no more than maintain equality, while after 28 h4 ♜f7 29 h5 ♜xd7 30 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 31 hgx6 hgx6 32 ♜xg6+ ♜g7 (as given by Bronstein) White should probably take an immediate draw by perpetual check. After 28

f4 ♖f7, Bronstein gave 29 fxe5? ♜xd7 30 ♖f1 ♜d1, when Black wins, but 29 ♖h3 or 29 ♙xe5 should keep things fairly level.

28 h4 ♙xd7 29 h5 (D)



29...gxh5?!

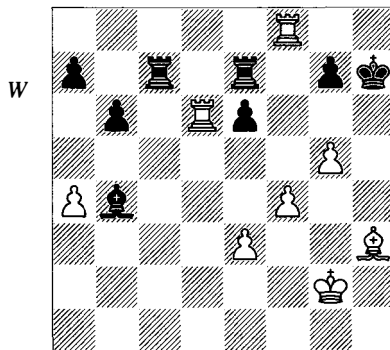
On 29...g5 30 ♙xf6, Black cannot contemplate 30...♖xf6 as 31 ♖xf6 ♜xf6 32 ♜xd7 gives him a lost rook endgame, so he must try 30...♜xf6 31 ♖xg5+ ♔f7 32 h6. Then 32...e5? loses to 33 ♜d6, while 32...♖e7? 33 ♜xd7 isn't much more palatable. However, 32...♙e7! is a solid defence; e.g., 33 e4 ♙e8 34 ♖g8+ ♜f8 35 ♖xh7 ♖e7 36 ♖g6+ ♖f7 37 ♖g3 ♖f4.

30 e4 e5 31 f4 exf4?

White is better after 31...♖e7 32 fxe5 fxe5 33 ♙xe5 ♙g4 34 ♜d5 or 31...♜f7 32 ♖xh5 (or 32 ♜d3), but both are more resilient than the move played.

32 ♜d6 ♖e8 33 ♙xf6 ♜f7? 34 ♜d5 1-0
(Now return to page 139.)

Additional Exercise 72A



In the game, he played **37 ♜dd8?!**, which indeed is sufficient for victory. Yet a much more pleasing way is the striking and effective 37 g6+!, underlining the desperate position of the black king. Then either 37...♙xg6 38 ♙f5+ or 37...♙h6 38 ♙f5! leads to mate.

The game continued:

37...♙g6

Instead 37...g6 would have prolonged the struggle.

38 ♙f3 ♜f7 39 ♜h8 e5 40 ♙g4

Or 40 ♙e6, which also wins.

40...exf4 41 ♜d5 fxe3+ 42 ♙g3 1-0

(Now return to page 146.)

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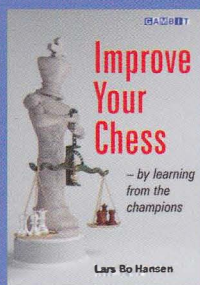
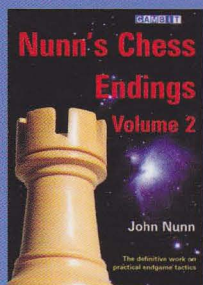
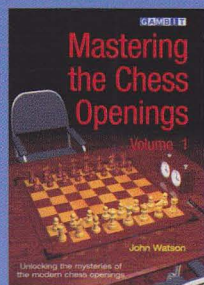
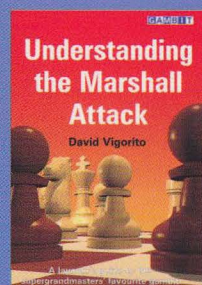
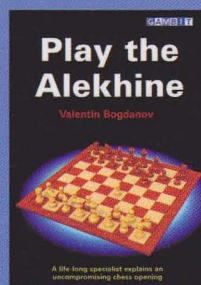
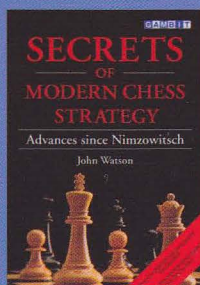
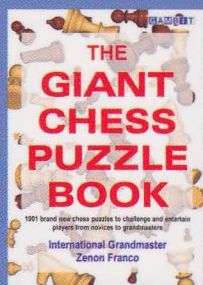
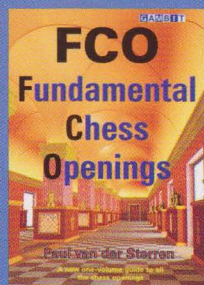
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